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IN FIFTY VOLUMES.

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By JOHN WESLEY, M. A.  
Late FELLOW of *Lincoln-College*, OXFORD.

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VOL. XLIV.

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BRISTOL:  
Printed by E. FARLEY.

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EXTRACT  
FROM THE  
WORKS  
OF  
Mr. *FLAVEL*.  
CONTINUED.

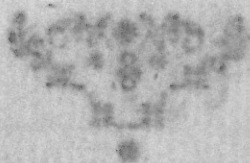


WORKS



13

CONTINUED.



# Husbandry Spiritualiz'd:

OR, THE

HEAVENLY USE

OF

EARTHLY THINGS.

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A 3

TO



Holborn, Spiritualist's:

OF THE

HEAVENLY USE

O F



EARTHLY THINGS.



TO

AT



T O T H E  
R E A D E R.

**T**H E R E are three Things wherein (as it hath been said long ago) the Exercise of Godliness doth chiefly consist: Prayer, Temptation, Meditation; Meditation is the Subject of the following Manual. The Object of Meditation is twofold: 1st, The Word; 2dly, The Works of GOD. The Works of GOD are twofold: 1st, Internal; 2dly, External. The external Works of GOD are twofold: 1st, Of Creation; 2dly, Of Providence. The Works of Providence are likewise twofold: 1st, In Things Civil, the LORD ordering and overruling all the Affairs and Motions of single Persons, Families and Nations, in a Subserviency to his own most holy Purposes: 2dly, In Things Natural, the LORD instructing the Husbandman to Discretion, and teaching him how to dress and till the Earth, that it may give Seed to the Sower, and Bread to the Eater; as also how to breed up and manage Beasts of the Field,  
both

*both greater and lesser Cattle, for the Use and Service of Man.*

*Meditation upon this lower Part of the Works of GOD, and his wonderful Providences about them, may raise our Souls very high; and while we wisely consider these natural Things, we may grow more and more wise in Spirituals and Eternals.*

*The Author of the ensuing Discourse hath supplied us with an excellent Help for the Spiritualizing of the Providential Works of GOD in natural Things: We chiefly want the Help of the Holy Spirit (without which all other Helps and Helpers are altogether insufficient) to frame and wind up our Hearts, for this both profitable and delightful Duty; yet the Help which the LORD is pleased to give us for our Direction in it, by the Ministry of Man, is not only not to be refused, but thankfully received and improved; and all little enough to bring our Minds to, or keep them at this Work: Even good Men (tho' they are not earthly-minded) have Earth in their Minds; which like a heavy Clog at their Heels, or a Weight at their Hearts, pressed them down when they would mount upward in Meditation. We find it no easy Matter to keep off earthly Thoughts, when we are most seriously engaged in heavenly Work; how hard is it then to be fixed upon heavenly Thoughts, while we are engaged about earthly Work; yea, are (as*



*is the Husbandman) working the very Earth, and raking in the Bowels of it.*

*It is a great Part of our Holiness to be spiritually-minded, while we are conversing with GOD through Jesus Christ in spiritual Duties; but to be spiritually-minded, and to mind spiritual Things, when we are conversing with the Clods of the Earth, and the Furrows of the Field, when we have to do with Corn and Grass, with Trees and Plants, with Sheep and Oxen, when we behold the Birds and Fowls of the Air, the Worms, and all that creep upon the Ground, then (I say) to be spiritually-minded, and thence to have our Thoughts ascending and soaring up to GOD, witnesseth an high Degree of Holiness, and of gracious Attainments. To make a Ladder out of earthly Materials, for the raising of ourselves in Spirit up to Heaven, is the Art of Arts. Holy and happy indeed are they, who (being taught of GOD) have learned this Art, and live in the daily Practice of it! Earthly Objects usually binder us in our Way, sometimes turn us quite out of our Way to Heaven. Many plow and sow, dig and delve the Earth, 'till their Hearts become as earthly as the Earth itself: Many deal about the Beasts of the Field, 'till themselves become even brutish. Is it not then a blessed Design which this Author aims at, so to spiritualize all Sorts, or the whole Compass of earthly Husbandry, that all Sorts of Husbandmen may become spiritual and heavenly?*

*Let*



*Let me add one Word more to the Reader. This Book of Husbandry Spiritualized, is not calculated only for the common Husbandmen; Persons of any Calling or Condition, may find the Author working out such searching Reflections, and strong Convictions, from almost every Part of the Husbandman's Work, as may, if faithfully improved, be very useful to them; to some for their Awakening, to consider the State of their Souls, whether in Grace or in Nature; to others for their Instruction, Consolation and Encouragement in the Ways of Grace, as also for their Proficiency and Growth in those Ways. That the Blessing of the LORD, and the Breathings of his good Spirit may go out with it, for all those gracious Purposes, is the Heart's Desire and Prayer of him, who is,*

**Christian Reader,**

**A sincere Well-wisher to thy precious  
and immortal Soul,**

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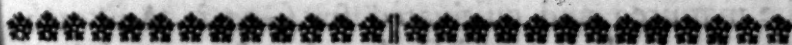
**JOSEPH CARYL.**



**THE**



T H E  
P R E F A C E.



I COR. iii. 9.

*Ye are GOD's Husbandry.*

**T**HE Scope and Design of the following Chapters, being the spiritual Improvement of Husbandry, it will be necessary to acquaint the Reader with the Foundation and general Rules of this Art in the Scripture, thereby to procure greater Respect unto, and prevent Prejudice against Composures of this Kind.

To this End I shall entertain the Reader a little While upon what this Scripture affords us, which will give a fair Introduction to the following Discourse.

THE

THE Apostle's Scope in the Context being to check and repress the Vain-glory and Emulation of the *Corinthians*, who instead of Thankfulness for, and an humble and diligent Improvement of the excellent Blessings of the Ministry, turned all into vain Ostentation and Emulation, one preferring *Paul* and another *Apollos*, in the mean Time depriving themselves of the choice Blessings they might have received by them both.

To cure this growing Mischief in the Churches, he checks their Vanity, and discovers the Evil of such Practices, by several Arguments, amongst which this is one, *Ye are GOD's Husbandry*, q. d. What are ye, but a Field, or Plat of Ground, to be manured and cultivated for GOD? And what are *Paul*, *Apollos*, and *Cephas*, but so many Workmen and Labourers, employed by GOD, the great Husbandman, to plant and water you all?

If then, you shall glory in some, and despise others, you take the ready Way to deprive yourselves of the Benefits and Mercies you might receive from the joint Ministry of them all. GOD hath used me to plant you, and *Apollos* to water you; you are obliged to bless Him for the Ministry of both, and it will be your Sin if you despise either. If the Workmen be discouraged in their Labours, it is the Field that loses and suffers by it; so that the Words are a Similitude, serving to illustrate the Relation,

1. WHICH the Churches have to GOD.

2. WHICH GOD's Ministers have to the Churches.

1. THE



1. THE Relation betwixt GOD and them, is like that of an Husbandman to his Ground or Tillage. The *Greek* Word signifies GOD's *Arable*, or that Plot of Ground which GOD manures by the Ministry of Pastors and Teachers.

2. IT serves to illustrate the Relation that the Ministers of *Christ* sustain to the Churches, which is like that of the Husbandman's Servants to him, and his Fields, which excellent Notion carries in it the perpetual Necessity of a Gospel Ministry. (For what Fruit can be expected, where there are none to till the Ground?) As also the Diligence, Accountableness, and Rewards, which these Labourers are to give to, and receive from GOD, the great Husbandman. All runs into this, That the Life and Employment of an Husbandman, excellently shadows forth the Relation betwixt GOD and his Church, and the relative Duties betwixt its Ministers and Members. Or more briefly thus: The Church is GOD's Husbandry, about which his Ministers are employed.

I SHALL not here observe my usual Method, (intending no more but a Preface to the following Discourse) but only open the Particulars wherein the Resemblance consists, and then draw some Inferences from the whole. The first I shall dispatch in these Particulars following:

1. THE Husbandman purchases his Fields, and give a valuable Consideration for them, *Jer. xxxiii. 9, 10.*

So hath GOD purchased his Church with a full valuable Price, even the precious Blood of his own Son, *Acts xx. 28. Feed the Church of GOD, which He hath purchased (or acquired) with his own Blood.*



O dear-bought Inheritance, how much doth this bespeak its Worth? Or rather, the high Esteem God hath of it, to pay down Blood, and such Blood for it: Never was any Inheritance bought at such a Rate. Sin made a Forfeiture of all to Justice, upon which *Satan* entered and took Possession, and as a strong Man armed, still keeps it in them, *Luke xi. 21.* but upon Payment of this Sum to Justice, true Believers pass over into God's Right and Propriety, and now are neither *Satan's*, *Acts xxvi. 18.* nor *their own*, *1 Cor. vi. 19.* but the LORD's peculiar, *1 Pet. ii. 6.*

2. CORN-FIELDS are carefully fenced by the Husbandman with Hedges and Ditches, to preserve their Fruits from Beasts that would otherwise overrun and destroy them. It is as good Husbandry to keep what we have, as to acquire more than we had.

MY *Well-beloved* hath a Vineyard in a very fruitful Hill, and He fenced it, *Isaiah v. 1, 2.* No Inheritance is better defended and secured, than the LORD's Inheritance, *Psalms cxxv. 2.* As the Mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD is round about his People. So careful is He for their Safety, that He createth upon every Dwelling-Place of Mount Sion, and upon her Assemblies, a Cloud and Smoke by Day, and the Shining of flaming Fire by Night; for upon all the Glory shall be a Defence, *Isaiah iv. 5.* Not a particular Believer, but is hedged about and inclosed in Arms of Power and Love, *Job i. 10.* Thou hast made a Hedge about him. The Devil fain would, but by his own Confession could not break over that Hedge to touch *Job*, 'till God's Permission made a Gap for him: Yea, He not only makes an Hedge, but a Wall about them, and that of Fire, *Zech. ii. 5.*

Sets

Sets a Guard of Angels to encamp round about them that fear Him, Psalm xxxiv. 7. And will not trust them with a single Guard of Angels neither, though their Power be great, and love to the Saints as great; but watches over them Himself also, *Isaiab* xxvii. 2, 3. *Sing ye unto her a Vineyard of red Wine, I the LORD do keep it, I will water it every Moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it Night and Day.*

3. HUSBANDMEN grudge not at the Cost they are at for their Tillage; but as they lay out vast Sums upon it, so they do it chearfully.

AND now, O Inhabitants of Jerusalem, and Men of Juda, judge I pray you, betwixt Me and my Vineyard; what could have been done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done in it? And as He bestows upon his Heritage the choicest Mercies, so He doth it with the greatest Chearfulness; for He saith, *Jer.* xxxii. 41. *I will rejoice over them, to do them Good; and I will plant them in this Land assuredly, with my whole Heart, and with my whole Soul.* "It is not the giving out of Mercy (saith one) that grieveth God, but the recoiling of his Mercies back again upon Him by the Creatures Ingratitude."

4. HUSBANDMEN are much delighted, to see the Success of their Labours: It comforts them over all their hard Pains, and weary Days, to see a good Increase.

MUCH more is God delighted in beholding the flourishing Graces of his People; it pleases Him to see his Plants laden with Fruit, and his Vallies sings with Corn, *Cant.* vi. 2. *My Beloved is gone down to the Garden, into his Beds of Spices, to feed*

*in the Gardens, and to gather Lillies. These Beds of Spices (say Expositors) are the particular Churches, the Companies of Believers; He goes to feed in these Gardens, as Men go to their Gardens to make merry, or to gather Fruit, Cant. iv. 16. He eats his pleasant Fruit, viz. his Peoples holy Performances, sweeter to Him than any Ambrosia: Thus He feeds in the Gardens, and He gathers Lillies when He translates good Souls into his Kingdom above: For the LORD taketh Pleasure in his Saints, and will beautify the Meek with Salvation.*

5. HUSBANDMEN employ many Labourers to work in their Fields; there is Need of many Hands for such a Multiplicity of Business.

GOD hath Diversity of Workmen also in the Churches, whom He sends forth to labour in his spiritual Fields, *Eph. iv. 12. He gave some Apostles, some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry. Amos iii. 7. I have sent my Servants the Prophets.* It is usual with the Apostles to place this Title of Servant among their honorary Titles, though a profane Mouth once called it, *Probrosum artificium*, a sordid Artifice. Christ hath stamped a great deal of Dignity upon his Ministers, in retaining them for the nearest Service to Himself, *1 Cor. iv. 1. Let a Man so account of us, as the Ministers of Christ; they are Workers together with GOD.* The Husbandman works in the Field among his Labourers, and the great GOD disdaineth not to work in and with his poor Servants, in the Work of the Ministry.

6. THE Work about which Husbandmen employ their Servants in the Field, is toilsome. You see



see they come Home at Night as weary as they can draw their Legs after them.

BUT GOD'S Workmen have a much harder Task than they. Hence are they set forth in Scripture by the laborious Ox, 1 Cor. ix. 9. Rev. iv. 7. Some derive the Word *Διακονος*, Deacon, from *κόνις*, a Word that signifies *Dust*, to shew the Laboriousness of their Employment, labouring 'till even choaked with Dust and Sweat. It is said of Epaphroditus, Phil. ii. 13. *That for the Work of Christ he was sick, and nigh unto Death; not regarding his Life, to supply their Lack of Service.* The Apostle's Expression, Col. i. ult. is very emphatical, *Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his Working, which worketh in me mightily.* The Word *Αγωνίζωμαι*, signifies, such spending Labour as puts a Man into an Agony; and *blessed is that Servant, whom his LORD when He cometh shall find so doing.*

7. THE immediate End of the Husbandman's Labour, and his Servant's Labour, is the Improvement of his Land, to make it more flourishing and fruitful.

THE Scope and End of the Ministry is for the Churches Advantage. They must not lord it over GOD'S Heritage, as if the Church were for them, and not they for the Church; nor serve themselves of it, but be the Churches Servants for Jesus's Sake; *the Power they have received being for Edification, and not for Destruction.* Christ hath given them to the Churches: Their Gifts, their Time, their Strength, and all their ministerial Talents are not their own, but the Churches Stock and Treasure.



8. THOSE that spend their Time and Strength all their Days, in manuring and plowing the Fields, maintaining themselves and their Families by their Labours; their Hands are sufficient for themselves and theirs.

EVEN so hath GOD ordained, that they which preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel, 1 Cor. ix. 14. *The Workman is worthy of his Meat*, Matt. x. 10. It is a sad Thing, if those who break the Bread of Life to Souls, should be suffered to want Bread themselves. GOD would not have the Mouth of the Ox muzzled that treads out the Corn, but have Liberty to eat, as well as work: Yet if any Pretender to the Ministry be like the Heifer that loves not to tread out the Corn, i. e. cares to do no Work, but such as brings in present Pay; he therein sufficiently discovers his Beast-like Disposition. Ministers must be faithful in their Master's Work, and if Men do not, GOD will reward them: For, *He is not unrighteous to forget their Work, and Labour of Love*, Heb. vi. 10.

9. THERE is a vast Difference betwixt those Fields which have been well husbanded, and dressed by a skilful and diligent Husbandman, and those that have been long out of Husbandry. How fragrant is the one! How dry and barren the other!

THUS stands the Case betwixt those Places which GOD hath blessed with a faithful, painful Ministry, and such as have none, or worse than none: For as the Husbandman's Cost and Pains appears in the verdant and fragrant Hue of his Fields; so a Minister's Pains and Diligence is ordinarily seen in the heavenly Lives and flourishing Graces of the People. The Churches of *Corinth* and *Theffalonica*, where St. Paul and other holy In-

stru-

struments spent much of their Time and Pains, became famous and flourishing Churches, 2 Cor. ix. 2. A special Blessing comes along with a godly Minister to the Place where Providence assigns him. Such Places, like Gideon's Fleece, have the Dew of Heaven lying on them, whilst others round about are dry and barren.

10. HUSBANDMEN find low Grounds and Vallies, most fertile. Hills, how loftily soever they over-top the lower Grounds, yet answer not the Husbandman's Pains, as the Vallies do. They are best watered and secured from the scorching Heat of the Sun.

EXPERIENCE shews us, that the humblest Persons are most fruitful under Gospel. *These are they that receive with Meekness the ingrafted Word,* James i. 21. whose Influences abide in them, as the Rain doth in the low Vallies. Happy is that Minister, whose Lot falls in such a pleasant Valley. *Blessed are they that sow beside all such Waters, that send forth thither the Feet of the Ox and the Ass,* Isaiah xxxii. 20. Among these Vallies run the pleasant Springs and purling Brooks, which fertilize the neighbouring Ground. Heavenly Ordinances there, leave fruitful Influences.

11. *Lastly,* WHEN Fields-prove barren, and will not quit the Husbandman's Cost, nor answer the Seed he sows in them, he plucks up the Hedges, and lays them waste.

So when Churches grow formal and fruitless, the LORD removes his Gospel-presence from them, plucks up the Hedge of his Protection from about them, and lays them open, as waste Ground, to be over-run by their Enemies. What is become of those

those once flourishing Churches of *Asia*? Are they not laid waste, and trodden down by Infidels? Now go to (saith the great Husbandman) *I will tell you what I will do to my Vineyard; I will pull up the Hedge thereof, and it shall be laid waste, Isa. v. 5.*

THUS you see the Allegory opened in its Particulars: From the whole, I shall present you with the ensuing Inferences:

(1.) How great then are the Dignities and Privileges of the Church of *Jesus Christ*, whom He hath appropriated to Himself, above all the People of the Earth, to be his peculiar Inheritance? The rest of the World is a waste Wilderness; all other Places, how pleasant soever in Respect of their natural Amenity and Delights, are truly enough called the dark Places of the Earth; dismal, solitary Cells, where Bitterns, Cormorants, and every doleful Creature dwells: But the Church is the Paradise of the Earth, a *Garden enclosed*, Cant. iv. 12. in whose Hedges the Gospel-Birds sing melodiously, Cant. ii. 12. Its *Beds are Beds of Spices*, and betwixt its pleasant Banks a chrystal River of living Water runs, the Streams whereof make glad the City of GOD, in the Midst thereof the LORD Himself delights to walk. O *Sion*, with what Pleasures dost thou abound! If *Bernard* were so ravished with the Delights of his Monastery, because of its green Banks, shady Bowers, Herbs, Trees, and various Objects to feed his Eyes, and fragrant Smells, and sweet and various Tunes of Birds, together with the Opportunities of devout Contemplation, that he cried out admiringly, LORD, *what Delights dost Thou provide, even for the Poor!* How much more should we be ravished with *Sion's* Glory? For beautiful for Situation is Mount *Sion*. Of whom it may much more truly be said, what a



Chronicler of our own once said of *England*, That it is the fortunate Island, the Paradise of Pleasure, the Garden of God, whose Vallies are like *Eden*, whose Hills are as *Lebanon*, whose Springs are as *Pisgab*, whose Rivers are as *Jordan*, whose Wall is the Ocean, and whose Defence is the LORD JEHOVAH. Happy art thou, O *Israel*, who is like unto thee? Who can count the Privileges wherewith *Christ* hath invested his Churches? O let it never seem a light Thing in our Eyes, that we grow within his blessed Inclosure! How sweet a Promise is that, *Exod. xix. 5. Ye shall be to Me a peculiar Treasure, above all People; for all the Earth is Mine.*

(2.) If the Church be God's Husbandry, then there is such a special gracious Presence of the LORD in his Churches, as is not to be found in all the World beside. Where may you expect to find the Husbandman, but in his own Fields? There lies his Business, and there he delights to be. And where may we expect to find God, but in the Assemblies of his Saints? *He walks among the Golden Candlesticks, Rev. ii. 1. I will walk among you,* (saith He) *and be your God, 2 Cor. vi. 16.* Upon this Account the Church is called JEHOVAH *Shammab, the LORD is there, Ezek. xlvi. ult.* You may see the Footsteps of GOD in his Creatures; but the Face of God is only to be seen in his Ordinances. Hence *Psalms xxviii. 4. David longed for the Temple, that he might see the Beauty of the LORD.* Now, what is Beauty, but a Symetry and Proportion of Parts? In the Works of Creation, you see one Attribute manifested in one Thing, and another in another; but in the Sanctuary you may see Beauty, even all the Attributes of God displayed there. And indeed, we find in  
Scripture



Scripture such astonishing Expressions about the Visions of GOD in his Church, that in reading them, a Man can see little Difference betwixt it and Heaven; for as the Church is called Heaven, *Matt. xxv. 1.* so its Description is like that of Heaven, *Heb. xii. 22, 23.* *You are come to the Heavenly Jerusalem, and an innumerable Company of Angels, &c.* And *Rev. iv. 22.* *They shall see his Face, and his Name shall be written in their Foreheads.* And Verse 24. *The Saints are represented, standing nearer to the Throne of GOD, than the Angels themselves.* Hence also Ordinances are called Galleries, in which both Saints and Angels walk, beholding the Glory of Him that sits upon the Throne, *Zech. iii. 7.* *If you will keep my Ways, I will give you Galleries to walk in, among them that stand by.*

(3.) If the Church be GOD's Husbandry, then those that are employed in ministerial Work ought to be Men of great Judgment and Experience in Soul Affairs; for these are the Labourers whom GOD, the mystical Husbandman, employs and entrusts about his spiritual Husbandry. Should Husbandmen employ ignorant Persons, that neither understand the Rules nor proper Seasons of Husbandry, how much would such Workmen prejudice him? He will not employ such to weed his Fields, as know not Wheat from Tares; or to prune his Trees, that think *Midsummer* as fit for that Work as *December*; much less will GOD. He qualifies all that He sends, with Wisdom for their Work. *His Workmen approve themselves Workmen indeed, such as need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth, 2 Tim. ii. 15.* As *Bezaleel* was furnished with Wisdom, before he was employed in *Tabernacle-work*, so *Christ* instructs his Servants with

with Skill and Insight, before they are employed in ministerial Work. He gives them a *Mouth and Wisdom*, Luke xxi. 15. *endues them with Power from on high*: As *Christ* was filled abundantly with the Spirit for his Work, in Proportion are those that are sent by Him, *John* xx. 21, 22. *As my Father hath sent me, so send I you*. And as for those that run before they are sent, and understand not the Mysteries of the Gospel, I shall say no more of them, but this; *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*.

(4.) To conclude, If the Church be God's Husbandry, that is, if Husbandry have so many Resemblances of God's Work about the Church in it; then how inexcusable is the Ignorance of Husbandmen in the Things of God, who besides the Word of the Gospel, have the Teachings of the Creatures; and can hardly turn their Hands to any Part of their Work, but the Spirit hints one spiritual Use or other from it? How do the Scriptures abound with Parables and lively Similitudes taken from Husbandry? From the Field, the Seed, the Plow, the Barn, from Threshing and Winnowing; also from planting, grafting and pruning of Trees; and not a few from the ordering of Cattle. So that to what Business soever you turn your Hands, in any Part of your Calling, still God meets you with one heavenly Instruction or other. But, alas! how few are able to improve their Employments to such excellent Ends?

THESE Things are but briefly hinted in the Scriptures, and those Hints scattered up and down, that they know not where to find them; and if they could, yet would it be difficult so to methodize them, as it is necessary they should be, in order to their due Improvement by Meditation.

AND

AND therefore I judged it necessary to collect and prepare them for your Use, and in this Manner to present them to you, as you find them in the following Chapters. Read, consider, and apply; and the LORD make you good Husbands for your own Souls.







# Husbandry Spiritualized.

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## PART I.

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### CHAP. I.

#### Upon the Industry of the Husbandman.

*In the laborious Husbandman you see,  
What all true Christians are, or ought to be.*

#### OBSERVATION.

THE Employment of the Husbandman  
is by all acknowledged to be very la-  
T borious; there is a Multiplicity of Bu-  
siness incumbent on him. The End of  
one Work, is but the Beginning of a-  
nother. Every Season of the Year brings its pro-  
per Work with it: Sometimes you find him in his  
Vol. XLIV. C Fields,



## 26 *Husbandry Spiritualiz'd: Or,*

Fields, Dressing, Plowing, Sowing, Harrowing, Weeding, or Reaping; and sometimes in his Barn, Threshing, or Winnowing; sometimes in his Orchard, Planting, Grafting, or Pruning his Trees; and sometimes among his Cattle: So that he hath no Time to be idle. And as he hath a Multiplicity of Business, so every Part of it is full of Toil: He eats not the Bread of Idleness, but earns it before he eats it; and as it were dips it in his own Sweat, whereby it becomes the sweeter to him. Though Sin brought in the Husbandman's Sweat, yet now not to sweat would increase his Sin.

### APPLICATION.

BEHOLD here the Life of a serious Christian. As the Life of a Husbandman, so the Life of a Christian is no idle or easy Life. They that take up Religion for Ostentation, that place the Business of it in Notions and idle Speculations, in Forms, Gestures, and external Observances, may think, and call it so: But such as devote themselves unto it, and make Religion their Business, will find it no easy Work, to exercise themselves to Godliness. Many there are, that affect the Reputation of it, who cannot endure the Labour of it. If Men might be indulged to divide their Hearts betwixt God and the World, or to cull out the cheap and easy Duties of it, and neglect the more difficult and costly ones, it were an easy Thing to be a Christian: But surely to have Respect to all God's Commandments, to live the Life, as well as speak the Language of a Christian; to be holy in all Manner of Conversation, is not so easy. This will be evident, by comparing the Life of a Christian, with the Life of a Husbandman, in these five Particulars; wherein it will appear, that the Work of a Christian, is by much the hardest Work of the two.

I. THE

## *The heavenly Use of earthly Things. 27*

1. THE Husbandman hath much to do, many Things to look after; but the Christian more: If we respect the Extensiveness of his Work, he hath a large Field indeed to labour in, *Psal. cxix. 96. The Commandment is exceeding broad*; of a vast Extent and Latitude, comprising not only a Multitude of external Acts and Duties, and guiding the Offices of the outward Man about them, but also taking in every Thought and Motion of the inner Man.

You find in the Word, a World of Work cut out for Christians; there is hearing Work, praying Work, reading, meditating, and self-examining Work; it puts him also upon a constant Watch over all the Corruptions of his Heart. Oh, what a World of Work hath a Christian about them? For of them he may say, as the Historian doth of *Hannibal*, They are never quiet, whether conquering or conquered. How many weak languishing Graces hath he to recover, improve and strengthen? There is a weak Faith, a languishing Love, dull and faint Desires to be quickened and invigorated. And when all this is done, what a Multitude of Work do his several Relations exact from him? He hath a World of Business incumbent on him, as a Parent, Child, Husband, Wife, Master, Servant, or Friend, yea, not only to Friends, but Enemies. And besides all this, how many difficult Things are there to be borne and suffered for *Christ*? And yet will not God allow his People in the Neglect of any one of them: Neither can he be a Christian that hath not Respect to every Command, and is not holy in all Manner of Conversation. Every one of these Duties, like the several Spokes in a Wheel come to bear in the whole Round of a Christian's Conversation: So that he hath more Work upon his Hands than the Husbandman.

## 28 Husbandry Spiritualiz'd : Or,

2. THE Husbandman's Work is confessed to be spending Work, but not like the Christian's. What *Augustus* said of the young *Roman*, is verified in the true Christian, *Quicquid vult, valde vult*. Whatsoever he doth in Religion, he doth to Purpose. Under the Law, GOD rejected the Snail and the Ass, *Levit. xi. 30. Exod. xiii. 13.* And under Gospel, He allows no sluggish, lazy Professor. Sleepy Duties are utterly unsuitable to the Living GOD; He will have the very Spirits distilled and offered up to him in every Duty, *John iv. 24.* He bestows upon his People, the very Substance and Kernel of Mercies, and will not accept from them the Shells and Shadows of Duties; not the Skin, but the Inwards, and the Fat that covereth the Inwards, was required under the Law, *Exod. xxix. 30.* And every Sacrifice under the Gospel, must be a Sacrifice full of Marrow; observe the Manner in which their Work is to be performed.

*Rom. xii. 11.* In serving GOD, *servent in Spirit.* *2 Pet. i. 10.* In securing Salvation, *diligent*; or doing it thoroughly, and enough. *1 Tim. iv. 7.* In Godliness, *exercising*, or stripping themselves, as for a Race. *Luke xiii. 24.* In the Pursuit of Happiness, *striving* even to an Agony. *Acts xxvi. 7.* In Prayer, *serving GOD instantly*; or in a stretched out Manner; yea, *pouring out their Hearts before Him*, *Psal. lxii. 8.* as if the Body were left like a dead Corpse upon the Knees, whilst the Spirit is departed from it, and ascended to GOD. This is the Manner of his Work: Judge then how much harder this Work, than to spend the Sweat of the Brow in manual Labour.

3. THE Husbandman finds his Work as he left it; he can begin one Day where he left the other; but it is not so with the Christian, a bad Heart, and



## *The heavenly Use of earthly Things. 29*

and a busy Devil, disorder and spoil his Work every Day. The Christian finds not his Heart in the Morning, as he left it at Night; and even when he is about his Work, how many Set-backs doth he meet with? *Satan* stands at his Right-hand (the working Hand) to resist him, *Zech. iii. 1. When he would do Good, Evil* (the Evil of his own Heart and Nature) *is present with him.*

4. THE Husbandman hath some resting Days, when he throws aside all his Work; but the Christian hath no resting Day, 'till his dying Day; and then he shall rest from his Labours. Religion allows no idle Days, *but requires him to be always abounding in the Work of the LORD, 1 Cor. xv. 58.* When one Duty is done, another calls for him; the LORD's Day is a Day of Rest to the Husbandman, but no Day in the Week so laborious to the Christian. When he hath gathered in the Crop of one Duty, he is not to sit down satisfied therewith, or say, as that rich Worldling did, *Luke xii. 19. Soul, take thine Ease, thou hast Goods laid up for many Years;* but must to plow again, and count it well if the Vintage reach to the Seed-time, *Lev. xxvi. 5.* I mean, if the Strength, Influence, and Comfort of one Duty, hold out to another Duty; and that it may be so, and there be no Room left for Idleness, God hath appointed ejaculatory Prayer, to fill up the Intervals, betwixt stated and more solemn Duties. These are to keep in the Fire, which kindled the Morning Sacrifice. When can the Christian sit down and say, *Now all my Work is ended, I have Nothing to do without Doors or within.*

*Lastly,* THERE is a Time when the Labour of the Husbandman is ended; old Age and Weakness take him off from all Employment; they can only look upon their Labourers, but cannot do a Stroke



## 39 Husbandry Spiritualiz'd: Or,

of Work themselves; they can tell you what they did in their younger Years, but now (say they) we must leave it to younger People; we cannot be young always; but the Christian is never superannuated as to the Work of Religion; yea, the longer he lives, the more his Master expects from him. When he is full of Days God expects he should be full of Fruits, *Psal. xcii. 14. They shall bring forth Fruit in old Age, they shall be fat and flourishing.*

### REFLECTIONS.

1. How hard, may the Wordling say, have I laboured for the Meat that perisheth? prevented the Dawning of the Day, and laboured as in the very Fire, and yet is the Christian's Work harder than mine? Surely then, I never understood the Work of Christianity. Alas, my sleepy Prayers, and formal Duties, even all that I ever performed in my Life, never cost me that Pains, that one Hour at Plow hath done. I have either wholly neglected, or at best, so lazily performed religious Duties, that I may truly say, I offer to God what cost me Nothing. Woe is me, poor Wretch! How is the Judgment of *Corah* spiritually executed upon me? The Earth opened her Mouth, and swallowed up his Body; but it hath opened its Mouth and swallowed up my Heart, my Time, and all my Affections. How far am I from the Kingdom of God!

2. AND how little better is my Case, may the Formalist say, who have indeed professed Religion, but never made it my Business? Will an empty (though splendid) Profession save me? How many brave Ships have perished in the Storms, notwithstanding their fine Names, the *Prosperous*, the *Success*, the *Happy Return*? A fine Name could not protect them

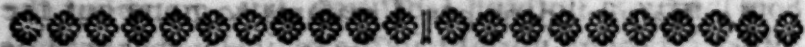
*The heavenly Use of earthly Things.* 31

them from the Rocks, nor will it save me from Hell. I have done by Religion, as I should have done by the World; prayed, as if I prayed not; and heard, as if I heard not. I have given to God but the Shadow of Duty, and can never expect from him a real Reward.

3. How unlike a Christian dost thou also (O my Soul) may a slothful Christian say, go about thy Work? though upright in the main, yet how little Zeal and Activity dost thou express in thy Duties? Awake Love and Zeal, see'st thou not the Toil and Pains Men take for the World? How do they prevent the Dawning of the Day? And labour as in the Fire 'till Night; and all this for a Trifle! Should not every Drop of Sweat which I see trickle from their Brows, fetch (as it were) a Drop of Blood from my Heart? who am thus convinced and reprov'd of shameful Laziness, by their indefatigable Diligence. Do they pant after the Dust of the Earth? *Amos ii. 7.* And shall not I pant after God? Ah, my Soul! it was not wont to be so with thee, in the Days of my Profession. Should I have had no more Communion with God in Duties then, it would have broken my Heart; I should have been weary of my Life. Is this a Time for one to stand idle, who stands at the Door of Eternity? What, slack-handed, when so near my everlasting Rest! Or hast thou found the Work of God so unpleasant to thee? Or the Trade of Godliness so unprofitable? Or knowest thou not, that Millions now in Hell perished for Want of serious Diligence in Religion? Nor doth my Diligence for God, answer to that which *Christ* hath done and suffered, to purchase my Happiness? Or to the Preparations He hath made for me in Heaven? Or dost thou forget that thy Master's Eye is always upon thee, whilst thou art lazing and  
louer-

## 32 Husbandry Spiritualiz'd: Or,

loitering? Or would the Damned live at this Rate as I do, if their Day of Grace might be recalled? For Shame (my Soul) for Shame! rouse up thyself, and fall to thy Work, with a Diligence answerable to the Weight thereof; for it is no vain Work concerning thee, it is thy Life.



### CHAP. II.

Upon the Thriftiness of the Husbandman.

*The hardest Labourers, are the thriving Men,  
If you'll have thriving Souls, be active then.*

### OBSERVATION.

**I**NDUSTRY and Diligence is the Way to thrive and grow rich in the World. The Earth must be manured, or its Increase is in vain expected; *Quin fugit molam, fugit farinam*; he that refuses the Mill, refuses the Meal, (saith the Proverb) *The diligent Soul shall be made fat.* Solomon hath two Proverbs concerning Thriftiness and Increase in the World. In Prov. x. 4. he saith, *The Hand of the Diligent maketh rich.* And ver. 22. he saith, *The Blessing of the LORD maketh rich.* These are not contradictory, but confirmatory each of other; one speaks of the principal, the other of the instrumental Cause. Diligence without God's Blessing will not do it; and that Blessing cannot be expected without Diligence; therefore Husbandmen



men ply their Business with unwearied Pains, they even lodge in the Midst of their Labours, as that good Husband *Boaz* did, *Ruth* ii. 3. They are parsimonious of their Time, but prodigal of their Strength, because they find this to be the thriving Way.

APPLICATION.

As Nature opens her Treasures to none but the diligent, so neither doth Grace. He that will be rich, must be a painful Christian; and whosoever will closely ply the Trade of Godliness, shall comfortably and quickly find, *That in keeping God's Commandments there is great Reward*, *Psal.* xix. 11. *God is a bountiful Rewarder of such as diligently seek Him*, *Heb.* xi. 6. Nor will He suffer their Work to go unrewarded; yea, it sufficiently rewards itself, *1 Tim.* vi. 6. And its Reward is Twofold; (1) Present, and in Part; (2) Future, and in Full, *Mark* x. 29, 30. Now in this Time an Hundredfold, even from Suffering, which seems the most unprofitable Part of the Work, and in the World to come Life everlasting. If you ask what present Advantage Christians have by their Diligence? I answer, as much or more than the Husbandman hath from all his Toils and Labours. Let us compare the Particulars, and see what the Husbandman gets, that the Christian gets not also.

1. You get Credit by your Diligence; it is a Commendation and Honour to you, to be active and stirring Men: But how much more Honour doth God put upon his laborious Servants? It is the highest Honour of a Creature, to be active and useful for his God. Saints are called *Vessels of Honour*, as they are fitted for the Master's Use, *2 Tim.* ii. 21. Wherein consists the Honour of Angels

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gels but in this; that they are ministring Spirits, serviceable Creatures? And all the Apostles gloried in the Title of Servants. The lowest Office in which a Man can serve GOD, even that of a *Nathanim*, or Door-keeper, which was the lowest Order or Rank of Officers in the House of GOD, is yet preferred by *David* before the Service of the greatest Prince on Earth. It is no small Honour to be active for GOD.

2. You have this Benefit by your Labour, that thereby you avoid loose and evil Company, which would draw you into Mischief. By Diligence for GOD, the Christian also is secured from Temptations; *GOD is with them, while they are with Him, 2 Chron. xv. 2.* Communion with GOD in the Way of Duty, is a great Preservative against Temptations. The School-men put the Question, how the Angels and glorified Saints became impeccant? And resolve it thus: That they are secured from Sin, by the beatifical Vision; and sure I am that the Visions of GOD, not only in Glory, but now also in Duty, are marvellous Defences against Sin; and they that are most active for GOD, have the fullest and clearest Visions of GOD, *John xiv. 21.*

3. You have this Benefit by your Labour, that it tends much to the Health of your Bodies. The Christian hath this Benefit by his Labour, that it tends to a healthful State of Soul; *The Way of the LORD is Strength to the Upright, Prov. x. 29.* As those that follow their daily Labours in the Field, have much more Health than Citizens that idly, or Scholars that live a sedentary Life: So the active Christian enjoys more spiritual Health, and is troubled with fewer Complaints than others.

4. By

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4. By Diligence in your civil Employments, you preserve your Estates, and are kept from running behind-hand in the World. And by Activity and Diligence for God, Souls are kept from Back-sliding, and running back in their Graces and Comforts. Remissions and Intermissions in our Duties, are the first Steps and Degrees by which a Soul declines and wastes as to his spiritual Estate.

5. YOUR Pains and Diligence in the Fields, makes your Beds sweet to you at Night, *Eccles. v. 12. Rest is sweet to a laboring Man, whether he eat little or much.* But the diligent Life of a Christian makes the Clods of the Valley, his Grave, sweet unto him. Think, Christian, how sweet it will be for thee, when thou comest to die; to say then as thy Redeemer did, when near his Death, *John xvii. 4, 5. I have finished the Work that Thou gavest me to do; and now, O Father, glorify me with thine own Self.*

6. You get Estates by your Diligence and Labour; but what are your Gains to the Gains of Christians? They can get in an Hour, that which they will not part with for all the Gold and Silver on Earth.

So that compare these Labourers, as to all their Advantages, and you shall see, that there is no Trade like that which the diligent Christian drives.

### *REFLECTIONS.*

*First,* BLUSH then, O my Soul, at the Consideration of thy Laziness, which is attended with so many spiritual Wants! And can I wonder at it, when I refuse the painful Way of my Duty, in which the precious Fruits of Godliness, are only  
to



### 36 *Husbandry Spiritualiz'd: Or,*

to be found? If these Fruits lay upon the Surface of Duty, or could be had with Wishes, I should not want them; but to dig deep and take Pains I cannot. My Desires, like those of the slothful Man, kill me, because my Hands refuse to labour, *Prov. xxi. 25.* If every Duty were to be rewarded presently with Gold, would I not have been more assiduous in them? And yet I know that a Heart full of the Grace and Comfort of the Holy Ghost, is better than a House full of Gold and Silver. O what a Composition of Stupidity and Sloth am I! I have been all for the short Cut to Comfort, when constant Experience teacheth, that the farther Way about, by painful Duty, is the nearest Way to it. What Pains do Husbandmen take? What Perils do Seamen run for a little Gain? O sluggish Heart! wilt thou do Nothing for eternal Treasures?

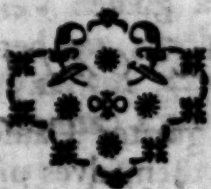
*Secondly,* If there be such great Rewards attending Diligence in Duty, then why art thou so apt (O my Soul) to cast off Duty, because thou findest not present Comfort in it? How quickly am I discouraged, if I presently find not what I expect in Duty? Whereas, the Well is deep, and much Pains must be taken to draw up those Waters of Joy. There is a golden Vein in the Mount of Duty, but it lies deep; and because I meet not with it as soon as I expect, my lazy Heart throws by the Shovel, and cries dig I cannot.

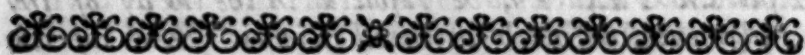
*Thirdly,* If this be indeed the rich and thriving Trade, may the Worldling say, why do I peddle about the poor low Things of the World so much, neglecting the rich Trade of Godliness for it? O, how much of my Time and Strength have these Things devoured? Had I employed that Time in Communion with GOD, would it not have turn'd to a better Account? Thinkest thou in Earnest, O my

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my Soul, that GOD hath endowed thee with such excellent Faculties, capable of the most divine and heavenly Employments, or that *Jesus Christ* hath shed his invaluable precious Blood, or that he hath sent forth the glorious Spirit of Holiness, and all this to fit Men for no higher or nobler Employments than these?

Is this the End of thy wonderful Creation? Doth GOD whirl about the Heavens in endless Revolutions, to beget Time for this? Or doth he not rather expect that the weightiest Work should engross thy greatest Strength, and choicest Hours? O, that I could once consider, what a good Master Christians serve, who will not only abundantly reward them at Night; but brings them their Food into the Field to encourage them in their Labour! What Pity is it, that so good a Master should be so badly served as He hath been by me.





CHAP. III.

Upon the Chearfulness of the Husbandman.

*The Plowman sings and whistles tho' he sweat,  
Shall Christians droop because their Work is great.*

OBSERVATION.

**T**HOUGH the Labours of Husbandmen are great and toilsome, yet with what Chearfulness do they go through them? Hear the Melody they make as they follow the Plow; yea, the very Horses have their Bells, which make a pleasant Noise. I have often been delighted with this Country Musick, whereby they sweeten their hard Labours with innocent Pleasure.

APPLICATION.

BUT how much greater Cause have the People of GOD to address themselves unto his Work with all Chearfulness of Spirit? And indeed, so far as the Heart is spiritual, it delights in its Duties. It is true, the Work of a Christian is painful, more than the Husbandman's, but then it as much exceeds in the Delight and Pleasures that attend it. What is the Christian's Work, but *with Joy to draw Water out of the Wells of Salvation*? You may see what a pleasant Path the Path of Duty is, by the  
Chear-



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Chearfulness of those that have walked in it, *Psal. cxix. 14. I have rejoiced in the Way of thy Judgments, as much as in all Riches.* And by the Promises that are made to such; *Psal. cxxxviii. 5. Yea, they shall sing in the Ways of the LORD, for great is the Glory of the LORD.*

AND lastly, by the many Commands, whereby Joy in the Ways of the LORD is made the Duty of the Saints. *Rejoice in the LORD, ye Righteous, for Praise is comely for the Upright, Psal. xcvii. 12. Rejoice, and again I say rejoice, Phil. iv. 4.* Where the Command is doubled; yea, not only simple Rejoicing, but the highest Degree of that Duty comes within the Command, *Psal. cxxxii. 2, 16. Shout for Joy, all ye that are upright in Heart.* And *Luke vi. 22, 23.* they are bid to leap for Joy, when about the difficultest Part of their Work. And that you may see there is sufficient Ground for it, and that is not like the mad Mirth of Sinners, be pleased to consider,

I. THE Nature of the Work about which they are employed; it is the most excellent and heavenly Employment that ever Souls were acquainted with. O what a delightful Thing it is to walk with GOD! And yet by this, the whole Work of a Christian is expressed, *Gen. xvii. 1.* Can any Life compare with this for Pleasure? Can they be chill, that walk in the Sunshine? Or sad, that abide in the Fountain of all Delights? And walk with Him whose Name is the GOD of all Comfort, *2 Cor. i. 3. In whose Presence is the Fulness of Joy, Psal. xvi. 11.* O what an angelical Life doth a Christian then live!

2. IF we consider the Variety of spiritual Employments. Change of Employment takes off the

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Tediousness of Labour. Variety of Voices please the Ear; Variety of Colours please the Eye; the same Meat prepared several Ways pleases the Palate more. But O the Variety of choice Dishes wherewith GOD entertains his People in a Sabbath! The Word, Prayer, Sacraments.

3. *Lastly*, CONSIDER the Suitableness of this Work to a regenerate Soul. Is it any Pain for a Bird to fly? Or a Fish to swim? Is the Eye tired with beautiful Objects? Or the Ear with melodious Sounds? As little can a spiritual Soul be wearied with spiritual and heavenly Exercises, *Rom. vii. 22. I delight in the Law of GOD after the inner Man.* Weighty Things are not heavy in their own Element or Center. And surely, GOD is the Center of all gracious Spirits. A Saint can sit from Morning to Night to hear Discourses of the Love and Loveliness of *Jesus Christ*. The Sight of your thriving Flocks, and flourishing Fields, cannot yield you that Pleasure which an upright Soul can find in one Quarter of an Hour's Communion with GOD. *They that are of the Flesh*, (saith the Apostle, *Rom. viii. 5.*) *do mind the Things of the Flesh, and they that are after the Spirit, the Things that are of the Spirit.* But then, look how much heavenly Objects transcend earthly ones, and how much the Soul is more capable of Delight in those Objects, than the gross and duller Senses are in theirs; so much doth the Pleasure arising from Duty, excell all sensitive Delights on Earth.

## REFLECTIONS.

How am I cast and condemned by this, may the carnal Heart say, who never favoured this spiritual Delight in holy Duties. When I am about my earthly Employments, I can go unweariedly from  
Day

## *The heavenly Use of earthly Things.* 41

Day to Day; all the Way is Down-hill by Nature; and the Wheels of my Affections being oiled with Delight, runs so fast, that they have need most Time of Triggling. Here I rather need the Curb than the Spur. O how fleet and nimble are my Spirits in these Pursuits! But what a Sluggard am I in religious Duties! Sure if my Heart were renewed, I should delight in the Law of God. All the World are alive in their Ways, every Creature enjoys his proper Pleasure; and is there no Delight to be found in the Paths of Holiness? Is Godliness only a dry Root that bears no pleasant Fruits? No, no, there are doubtless incomparable Pleasures to be found therein; but such an Heart as mine savours them not.

I CANNOT say but I have Delight in religious Duties, may even the Hypocrite say, but they have been such as rather sprang from the Ostentation of Gifts and Applause of Men, than any sweet and real Communion with God; they have rather proved Food and Fuel to my Pride, than Food to my Soul. Like the Nightingale I can sing sweetly, when I observe others listen to me, and affected with my Musick. O, deceitful Heart, such Delight as this will end in Howling! Were my Spirit right, it would as much delight in Retirements for the Enjoyment of God, as it doth in those Duties that are most exposed to the Observation of Man. Will such a Spring as this maintain a Stream of Affections, when carnal Motives fail? What wilt thou answer, (O my Soul) to that Question, *Job xxvii. 9, 10. Will God hear his Cry when Trouble comes upon him? Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?* What wilt thou reply to this Question? Deceive not thyself, O my Soul! thou wilt doubtless be easily persuaded to let go that thou never delightest in; and



from an Hypocrite in Religion, quickly become an Apostate from Religion.

FROM all this, the upright Heart takes Advantage to rouse up its Delight in God; and thus it expostulateth with itself: Doth the Plowman sing amidst his drudging Labours, and whistle away his Weariness in the Field, and shall I droop amidst such heavenly Employment? O my Soul, what wantest thou here to provoke thy Delight? If there be such an Affection as delight in Thee, methinks, such an Object as the blessed Face of God in his Ordinances should excite it. Ah, how would this ennoble all my Services, and make them Angel-like! How glad are those blessed Creatures to be employed for God? No sooner were they created but they sang, and shouted for Joy, *Job xxxviii. 7.* How did they fill the Air with heavenly Melody, when sent to bring the joyful Tidings of a Saviour to the World? Ascribing Glory to God in the highest, even to the highest of their Powers: Yea, this Delight would make all my Duties *Christ-like*; and the nearer that Pattern, the more excellent. He delighted to do his Father's Will, it was to Him Meat and Drink.

YEA, it would not only enable, but facilitate all my Duties, and be to me as Wings to a Bird in Flying, or Sails to a Ship in Motion. Oiled Wheels run freely; Or, *ever I was aware, my Soul made me like the Chariots of Aminadab.* What is the Reason (my God) my Delight in Thee should be so little? Is it not, because my Unbelief is so great? Rouse up my Delights, O Thou Fountain of Pleasure! And let me swim down the Stream of holy Joys in Duty, into the boundless Ocean of those immense Delights that are in thy Presence, and at thy Right Hand for evermore.



CHAP. IV.

Upon the due Quality of Arable Land.

*Corn-Land must neither be too fat, nor poor;  
The middle State suits best with Christians sure.*

OBSERVATION.

HUSBANDMEN find by Experience, that their Arable Lands may be dressed too much, as well as too little. If the Soil be over-rank, the Seed shoots up so much into the Stalk, that it seldom ears well; and if too thin and poor, it wants its due Nutriment, and comes not to Perfection. Therefore their Care is to keep it in Heart, not to over-dress it or under-dress it. The End of all their Cost and Pains about it is Fruit; and therefore Reason tells them, that such a State of it as best fits it for Fruit, is best both for it and them.

APPLICATION.

AND doth not spiritual Experience teach Christians, that a Competency of the Things of this Life, best fits them for the Fruits of Obedience, which is the End and Excellency of their Beings? The Altars of the Rich seldom smoke. When our outward Enjoyments are by Providence shaped and fitted to our Condition, as a Suit is to the Body, that fits close and neat, we cannot desire a better Condition in this World.

THIS

THIS it was that wise *Agur* requested of God, *Prov. xxx. 8, 9. Give me neither Poverty nor Riches, but feed me with Food convenient for me, lest I be full and deny Thee, and say, who is the LORD? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the Name of my GOD in vain.* Against both he prays equally, not absolutely; that had been his Sin; but submissively to the Will of GOD. He had rather, if GOD see it fit, avoid both Extremes; but what would he have then? Why, *Food convenient.* Or, according to the *Hebrew*, give me my Prey or Statute-Bread; which is a Metaphor from Birds which fly up and down to prey for their Young, and what they get they distribute among them; they bring them enough to preserve their Lives, but not more than enough, to lie mouldering in the Nest. Such a Proportion *Agur* desired; and the Reason why he desired it, is drawn from the Danger of both the Extremes. He measured the Conveniency or Inconveniency of his Estate in the World, by its Suitableness or Unsuitableness to the End of his Being. He accounted the true Excellency of his Life, to consist in its Tendency to the Glory of GOD; and he could not see how a Redundancy or too great Penury could fit him for that; but a middle State, equally removed from both Extremes.

AND this was all that good *Jacob*, who was led by the same Spirit, looked at, *Gen. xxviii. 20. And Jacob vowed a Vow, saying, if GOD will be with me, and keep me in the Way that I go, and will give me Bread to eat, and Raiment to put on, so that I come again to my Father's House in Peace; then shall the LORD be my GOD.* *Jacob* desires no great Matters in the World, Food and Raiment will satisfy him. In spiritual Things his Desires are boundless, he is the most greedy and unsatisfied Man in the World, *Hos. xii. 4.* but in Matters of  
this



this Life, if he can get from GOD but a Morsel of Meat, and a Mouth-full of Water, he will not envy the richest *Crasus* upon Earth. Meat and Drink are the Riches of Christians. *Divitiæ sunt ad legem naturæ composita paupertas* (saith *Pomponius Atticus*) Riches are such a Poverty or Mediocrity, as hath enough for Nature's Uses; and such a State is best accommodated, both to the Condition and to the Desires of a Saint.

1. To his Condition; for what is a Saint, but a Stranger and a Pilgrim upon Earth, a Man in a strange Country travelling Homeward? So *David* professed himself, *Psal. cxix. 19. I am a Stranger in this Earth.* And so those Worthies who are now at Home in Heaven, *Heb. xi. 13.* professed themselves to be Strangers and Pilgrims upon Earth, and to seek a Country: A *Viaticum* contents a Traveller, he will not cumber himself with superfluous Things, which rather clog and tire, than help him in his Journey.

2. It suits best with his Desires, I mean his regular and advised Desires. For,

(1.) A GRACIOUS Soul earnestly desires a free Condition in the World: He is sensible He hath much Work to do, a Race to run, and is loth to be clogg'd, or have his Foot in the Snare of the Cares or Pleasures of this Life: He knows that Fulness exposes to Wantonness and Irreligion, *Deut. vi. 12. Hos. xiii. 6.* It is hard, in the Midst of so many tempting Objects, to keep the golden Bridle of Moderation upon the Affections. The Heart of a Christian, like the Moon, commonly suffers an Eclipse when it is at the Full, and that by the Interposition of the Earth.

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IT was *Solomon's* Fulness that drew out and dissolved his Spirits, and brought him to such a low Ebb in Spirituals, that it remains a Question with some, Whether he ever recovered it to his dying Day. As it is the Misery of the Poor to be neglected of Men, so it is the Misery of the Rich to neglect GOD. Who can be poorer, than to have the World, and love it? Or richer, than to enjoy but little of it, and live above it?

AND on the other Side, extreme Poverty is no less exposed to Sin and Danger, *Lev. vi. 2, 3, 4.* As high and lofty Trees are subject to Storms and Tempests, so the lowest Shrubs to be brows'd on by every Beast; and therefore a good Man desires a just Competency, as the *fittest*, because the *freest* State.

(2.) A GRACIOUS Person desires no more but a Competency, because there is most of GOD's Love and Care discovered in giving in our daily Bread, by a daily Providence. It is betwixt such a Condition, and a Fulness of Provisions in our Hand, as it was betwixt *Ægypt* and *Canaan*; *Ægypt* was watered with the Foot from the River *Nilus*, and little of GOD was seen in that Mercy; but *Canaan* depended upon the Dews and Showers of Heaven, and so every Shower of Rain was a refreshing Shower to their Souls as well as Bodies. Most Men that have a Stock of Comforts in their Hands, look upon all as coming in a natural Course, and see very little of GOD in their Mercies. Pope *Adrian* built a College at *Louvain*, and caused this Inscription to be written in Letters of Gold on the Gates thereof; *Trajectum plantavit, Louvanium rigavit, Cæsar dedit incrementum*; i. e. *Utrecht* planted me, *Louvain* watered me, and *Cæsar* gave the Increase.

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Increase. One to reprove his Folly, wrote underneath, *Hic Deus nihil fecit* : Here God did Nothing. Carnal Men sow, and reap, and eat, and look no farther.

BUT when a Man sees his Mercies come in by the special Care of God for him, there is a double Sweetness in those Mercies; the natural Sweetness which comes from the Creature itself, every one, even the Beasts can taste that as well as thee; but besides that, there is a spiritual Sweetness, far exceeding the former, which none but a Believer tastes; and much of that comes from the Manner in which he receives it, because it comes (be it never so course or little) as a Covenant-Mercy to him. *He hath given Bread to them that fear Him, He is ever mindful of his Covenant*, Psalm cxi. 5. Luther, who made many a Meal upon a broiled Herring, was wont to say, " Let us be content  
" with course Fare here, have we not the Bread  
" that came down from Heaven? Do we not feed  
" with Angels?" A pregnant Instance of the Sweetness of such Mercies, is given us by a worthy Divine of our own, Mr. *Isaac Ambrose* : " For  
" mine own Part (saith he) however the LORD  
" hath seen Cause to give me but a poor Pittance  
" of outward Things, (for which I bless his Name)  
" yet in the Income thereof I have many Times  
" observed so much of his peculiar Providence,  
" that thereby they have been much sweetened,  
" and my Heart hath been raised to admire his  
" Grace. When of late under an hard Dispensation, all Streams of wonted Supplies being stopt,  
" the Waters of Relief for myself and Family did  
" run low; I went to Bed with some Doubtings  
" of the Fountains letting out itself for our Refreshing; but ere I did awake in the Morning,  
" a Letter was brought to my Bed-side, which  
" reported



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“ reported some unexpected Breakings-out of  
 “ GOD’s Goodness for my Comfort.” Where-  
 upon he sweetly concludes, “ One Morsel of  
 “ GOD’s Provision (especially if it come unexpect-  
 “ ed, and upon Prayer) will be more sweet to a  
 “ spiritual Relish, than all former full Enjoyments  
 “ were.”

MANY Mercies come unask’d for, and they re-  
 quire Thankfulness; but when Mercies come in  
 upon Prayer, and as a Return of Prayer, their  
 Sweetness more than doubles; for now it is both  
 GOD’s Blessing upon his own Institution, and a  
 Seal set to his Promise at once, *Psalms* lxvi. 16, 17.  
 Doubtless *Hannah* found more Comfort in her *Sam-  
 uel*, and *Rachel* in her *Naphtali*, (the one being  
 asked of GOD, and the other wrestled for with  
 GOD, as their Names import) than Mothers or-  
 dinarily do in their Children.

## REFLECTIONS.

Do the People of GOD desire only so much of  
 the Creatures (may the Hypocrite say) as may fit  
 them for the Service of GOD? What a Wretch  
 am I, that have desired only so much of Religion  
 as may fit me to gain the Creatures! As GOD’s  
 People have subjected all their Creature-enjoyments  
 to Religion; so, O my Soul, thou hast subjected  
 Religion to thy worldly Interest. Instead of Eat-  
 ing and Drinking to serve GOD, I have served  
 GOD to eat and drink: Yea, I have not only ach-  
 ed below Religion, but below Reason also; for  
 Reason dictates plainly, that the Means must never  
 be more excellent than the End. Wretch that I  
 am, to make Religion a Slave to my Lust, an Ar-  
 tifice to carry on my carnal Designs! Verily I have

my Reward; and this is all the Good I am ever like to get by it.

AND no less should the Worldling tremble, to consider how he hath cast off the Duties of Religion, made them stand aside, and give Place to the World. Instead of desiring so much only as might make him serviceable to GOD, he thrusts aside the Service of GOD to get as much of the World as he can, who is so far from making Godliness the End of his Comforts, that he rather looks upon it as an Hindrance to them. May not the very Heathens make me blush? Could *Aristotle* deliver this as a true Rule to Prosperity, to make Religion, our first and chief Care? Could *Aristippus* say, He would rather neglect his Means than his Mind? His Farm than his Soul? Will the very *Mahometans*, how urgent soever their Business be, lay it aside five Times in the Day to pray? Yea, is it common to a Proverb among the very *Papists*, that Mass and Meat hinders no Man; and yet I that profess myself a Christian, thrust out Duty for every Trifle? O wretched Soul! how hath the God of this World blinded mine Eyes? Can the World indeed do that for me, that *Christ* can do? Hath it ever proved true to them that trusted it? Hath it not at last turned them off as Men turn off a Sumpter Horse at Night, that hath been a Drudge to carry their Gold and Silver for them all Day, and at last is turned out with an empty Belly and a galled Back? O how righteous will that Sentence of GOD be? *Go cry to the Gods whom thou hast served!*

AND may not many turn in upon themselves with Shame and Sorrow, to consider how unsatisfied they have been in that Condition that others have preferred and esteemed as the greatest of all

outward Mercies? I have indeed been fed with Food convenient, but not contented: How hath my Heart been tortured from Day to Day with anxious Thoughts, what I shall eat and drink, and wherewith I and mine shall be cloathed? I pretend indeed that I care but for a Competency of the World, but sure I am, my Cares about it have been incompetent. Come my distrustful earthly Heart, let me propound a few Questions to thee about this Matter, and answer truly to what I shall now demand.

*Quest. 1.* HAST thou here a continuing City? Art thou at Home, or upon thy Journey, that thou art so solicitous about the World? Thy Profession indeed speaks thee a Stranger upon Earth, but thy Conversation a Home-dweller. *Erasmus* said, "he desired Honours and Riches, no more than a weary Horse doth a heavy Cloak-bag." Wouldst thou not account him a Fool, that would victual his Ship as much to cross the Channel to *France*, as if she were bound for the *East-Indies*? Alas! it will be but a little While, and then there will be no more Need of any of these Things. It is sad, that a Soul which stands at the Door of Eternity, should be perplexing itself about Food and Raiment.

*Quest. 2.* WHOM hast thou known to be the better for much of the World? It hath been some Mens utter Ruin. Seldom doth GOD suffer Men to be their own Carvers, but they cut their own Fingers. "To give Riches and Pleasure to an evil Man (saith *Aristotle*) is but to give Wine to one that hath a Fever." Where there is no Want, there is usually much Wantonness. What a sad Story was that of *Pius Quintus*, "When I was in a low Condition (said he) I had some

"com-

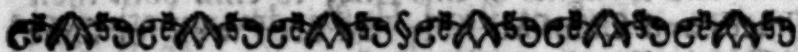


“comfortable Hopes of my Salvation; when I  
“came to be a Cardinal, I greatly doubted of it;  
“but since I came to the Popedom, I have no  
“Hope at all.” Though this poor undone Wretch  
spake it out, and others keep it in, yet doubtless  
he hath many thousand Fellows in the World that  
might say as much, would they but speak the  
Truth.

AND even those whom the World hath not ex-  
cluded out of Heaven, yet it hath sorely clogg’d  
them in the Way thither. Many that have been  
very humble, holy, and heavenly in a low Condi-  
tion, have suffered a sad Ebb in a full Condition.  
What a cold Blast have they felt coming from the  
Cares and Delights of this Life, to chill both their  
Graces and Comforts? It had been well for some  
of GOD’s People, if they had never known what  
Prosperity meant.

*Quest. 3.* Is not this a sad Symptom of a de-  
clining State of Soul, to be so hot, eager, and  
anxious about the Trifles of this Life? Thinkest  
thou, O my Soul, that one who walks in the  
Views of Glory, and maintains a Conversation in  
Heaven, can be much taken with those Vanities?  
Do not the Visions of GOD vail the tempting  
Splendor of the Creature? It was the Opinion of  
some of the Schoolmen, that the Reason why *Adam*  
in Paradise was not sensible of his Nakedness, was  
because he was wholly taken up in conversing with  
GOD. But this is certain, lively and sweet Com-  
munion with GOD, blunts and dulls the Edge of  
the Affections to earthly Things; and canst thou  
be satisfied, my Soul, with such Gains as are at-  
tended with such Losses?

*Quest. 4.* To conclude. Is it not dishonourable to God, and a Justification of the Way of the World, for me that profess myself a Christian to be as eager after Riches as other Men? *After all these Things do the Nations seek,* Matt. vi. 32. If I had no Father in Heaven, nor Promise in the Word, it were another Matter; but since my heavenly Father knows what I have Need of, and hath charged me to be careful in Nothing, but only tell him my Wants, *Phil. iv. 6.* How unbecoming a Thing is it in me to live and act as I have done! Let me henceforth learn to measure my Condition, rather by its Usefulness to God, than its Content and Ease to my Flesh.



## C H A P. V.

### Upon the Improvement of Bad Ground.

*Spent barren Land you can restore and nourish,  
Decayed Christians GOD can cause to flourish.*

### O B S E R V A T I O N.

**W**HEN Land is spent by Tillage, or for Want of Manuring, the careful Husbandman hath many Ways to recover it. He lets it lie fallow to give it Rest, and Time to recover itself, carries out his Sand, Lime, and Compost, to refresh and quicken it again; and in Pasture and Meadow-Ground, will wash it (if possible) with a Current of Water, or the Float of the Ways after

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after a Fall of Rain, which is to the Earth as a Spring of new Blood to a consumptive Body. He cuts down and kills the Weeds that suck it out, and causes them to make Restitution of what they have purloined from it, by rotting upon the Place where they grew. As careful are they to recover it when it is spent, as an honest Physician is of his Patient in a languishing Condition; for he knows his Field will be as grateful to him, and fully requite his Care and Cost.

### APPLICATION.

As Man's, so GOD's Husbandry is sometimes out of Order, not by yielding too many Crops, but too few. The mystical Husbandman hath some Fields, (I mean, particular Societies and Persons) who were once fragrant and fruitful like a Field which GOD had blessed, but are now decayed and grown barren; whose Gleanings formerly were more than their Vintage now: *The Things that are in them are ready to die.* It is possible for gracious Souls to be reduced to a very low Ebb, both of Graces and Comforts.

ONE that hath walked in sweet Communion with GOD, sunning himself in the Light of his Countenance, may afterwards *walk in Darkneſs, and ſee no Light*, *Iſaiah l. 10.* He that hath caſt Anchor within the Vail, and rode ſecurely in the peaceful Harbour of Assurance, may ſeem to feel his Anchor of Hope come Home to him, and go adrift into the ſtormy Ocean again, crying with the Church, *Lam. iii. 18. My Hope is periſhed from the LORD.* His calm and clear Air may be over-caſt and clouded, yea, filled with Storms and Tempeſts, Lightnings and Thunders: His Graces, like under-ground Flowers in the Winter, may all



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disappear, and hide their Heads. To God he may say, I am cast out of thy Sight; I know Thou canst do much, but wilt Thou shew Wonders to the Dead? To the Promises he may say, you are sweet Things, but what have I to do with you? I could once indeed rejoice in you as my Portion, but now I doubt I grasped a Shadow. To Saints he may say, turn away from me, labour not to comfort me, do not spill your precious Ointments of Consolation upon my Head; for what have I to do with Comfort? To former Experiences, he may say in his Haste, you are all Liars. To the Light of God's Countenance, he may say, farewell sweet Light, I shall behold thee no more. To Satan he may say, O mine Enemy, thou hast at last prevailed against me, thou art stronger than I, and hast overcome. To Duties and Ordinances, he may say, where is the Sweetness I once found in you? You were once sweeter to me than the Honey-comb; but now as tasteless as the White of an Egg.

BUT will God leave his poor Creatures helpless in such a Case as this? Shall their Leaf fall, their Branches wither, their Life depart? Will He see their Graces fainting, their Hopes gasping, the Things that are in them ready to die, and will He not regard it? Yes, yes, *There is Hope of a Tree if it be cut down, and the Root thereof wax old in the Earth, yet by the Scent of Water it will bud, and bring forth Boughs like a Plant, Job xiv. 8, 9.* This poor declining Soul, as sad as it sits at the Gates of Hell, may rouse up itself at last, and say to Satan, that stands triumphing over him, *Rejoice not over me, O mine Enemy, for though I fall, yet I shall arise; though I sit in Darknes, the LORD will be a Light unto me, Mic. vii. 8.* He may raise up himself upon his Bed of Languishing  
for

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for all this, and say to GOD, *Though Thou hast chastened me sore, yet hast Thou not given me over unto Death.* He may turn about to the Saints that have mourned for him, and with a lightsome Countenance say, *I shall not die, but live, and declare the Works of the LORD.* He may say to the Promises, you are the true and faithful Sayings of GOD, my Unbelief did belye you; I said in my Haste you were Lyars, but I am ashamed of my Folly. Surely, O my Soul, there is yet Hope in thine End, thou mayst be restored, thou mayst yet recover thy Verdure, and thy Dew be as the Dew of Herbs. For,

1. Is He not thy Father, and a Father full of Compassions and Bowels? And can a Father stand by his dying Child, see his fainting Fits, hear his melting Groans, and Pity-begging Looks; and not help him; especially having Restoratives by Him, that can do it? Surely, *As a Father pities his own Children, so will thy GOD pity thee,* Psal. ciii. 12, 13. *He will spare thee, as a Father spareth his own Son that serves him,* Mark iii. 17. Hark, how his Bowels yearn! *I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself: Is not Ephraim my dear Son? Is he not a pleasant Child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still, I will surely have Mercy on him,* Jer. xxxi. 20.

2. DO TH He not know thy Life would be altogether useles to Him, if He should not restore thee? What Service art thou fit to perform to Him, in such a Condition? *Thy Days will consume like Smoke, whilst thy Heart is smitten and withered like Grass. Thy Months will be Months of Vanity, they will fly away, and see no Good,* Job. vii. 3. *If He will but quicken thee again, then thou wilt call upon his Name:* But in a dead and languishing Condition,

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tion, thou art no more fit for any Work of GOD, than a sick Man is for manual Labours; and surely He hath not put those excellent Graces of his Spirit within Thee for Nothing; they were planted there for Fruit and Service, and therefore doubtless He will revive thee again.

3. YEA, Dost thou not think He sees thine Inability to bear such a Condition long? He knows *thy Spirit would fail before Him, and the Soul which He hath made*, Isa. lvii. 16. David told Him as much in the like Condition, *Psa'm cxliiii. 7, 8. Hear me speedily, O LORD, for my Spirit faileth; hide not thy Face from me, lest I be like unto those that go down into the Pit; q. d. LORD, make Haste and recover my languishing Soul; otherwise, whereas Thou hast now a sick Child, Thou wilt shortly have a dead Child.*

AND in like Manner *Job* expostulated with Him, *Job vi. 1, 2, 3, 11, 12. My Grief is heavier than the Sand of the Sea, my Words are swallowed up, for the Arrows of the Almighty are within me, and the Poison thereof drinks up my Spirits: The Terrors of GOD do set themselves in Array against me; what is my Strength that I should hope? Is my Strength the Strength of Stones? or are my Bones of Brass? Other Troubles a Man may, but this he cannot bear, Prov. xviii. 14. And therefore doubtless seasonable and gracious Revivings will come; He will not stir up all his Wrath; for He remembers thou art but Flesh, a Wind that passeth away, and cometh not again. He hath Ways enough to do it; if He do but unvail his blessed Face, and make it shine again upon thee, thou art saved. The Manifestations of his Love, will be to my Soul as Showers to the parched Grass: Thy Soul, that now droops and hangs the Wing, shall then revive and leap for*



for Joy. A new Face shall come upon thy Graces, they shall bud again, and blossom as the Rose: If he do but send a Spring of auxiliary Grace into thy Soul, then shalt thou return to thy first Works again, and sing as in the Days of thy Youth.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

THIS is my very Case, saith many a poor Christian; thus my Soul languishes and droops from Day to Day. How unlike am I to what once I was? Surely, as the old Men wept, when they saw how short the second *Temple* came of the Glory of the first; so may I sit down and weep bitterly, to consider how much my first Love and first Duties excelled the present. For,

1. Is my Heart so much in Heaven now, as it was wont to be? Say, O my Soul, dost thou not remember, when, like the beloved Disciple, thou layest in *Jesus's Bosom*? How didst thou sweeten Communion with Him? How restless and impatient wast thou in his Absence? Divine Withdrawments were to thee as the Hell of Hell: What a Burden was the World to me in those Days! Had it not been for Conscience of my Duty, I could have been willing to let all lie, that Communion with *Christ* might suffer no Interruption. When I awaked in the Night, how was the Darkness enlightened by the heavenly Glimpses of the Countenance of my God? How did his Company shorten those Hours, and beguile the Tedioufness of the Night? Is it now as it was then? No, no, those Days are past and gone, and thou become much a Stranger to that heavenly Life. Art thou able with Truth to deny this Charge? When occasionally I pass by those Places, which were once to me, as *Jacob's Bethel* to him, I sigh at the Remembrance of

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of former Passages betwixt me and Heaven there, and say with *Job*, Chap. xxix. *O that it were with me as in Months past, as in the Days when God preserved me, when his Candle shined upon my Head, when by his Light I walked through Darkness, when the Almighty was yet with me, when I put on Righteousness and it cloathed me, when my Glory was fresh in me! When I remember these Things, my Soul is poured out within me.*

2. Is thy Obedience to the Commands of *Christ*, and Motions to Duty, as free and chearful as they were wont to be? Call to Mind, my Soul, the Times when Thou wast borne down the Stream of Love to every Duty; if the Spirit did but whisper to thee, saying, *Seek my Face*, how did my Spirit eccho, *Thy Face, LORD, will I seek?* If GOD had any Work to be done, how readily did I offer my Service? Here am I, LORD, send me. My Soul made me as the Chariots of *Aminadab*; Love oiled the Wheels of my Affections, and his Commandments were not grievous. There were no such Quarrellings with the Command, no such Excuses and Delays as there are now. No; such was my Love to *Christ*, and Delight to do his Will, that I could no more keep back myself from Duty, than a Man that is carried away in a Crowd.

OR lastly, Tell me, O my Soul, dost thou bemoan thyself, or grieve so tenderly for Sin, and for grieving the Holy Spirit of GOD, as thou wast wont to do? When formerly I had fallen by the Hand of a Temptation, how was I wont to lie in Tears at the LORD's Feet? How did I hasten to my Closet, and there cry, like *Ezra*, Chap. ix. 6. *O my GOD, I am ashamed, and blush to look up unto Thee?* How did I sigh and weep before Him, and like *Ephraim*, smite upon my Thigh, saying, *What have I done?*

Ah!

Ah! my Soul, how didst thou work, strive, and cast about, to recover thyself again? Hast thou forgotten how thou wouldst sometimes look up and sigh bitterly? Ah! what a God have I provoked? What Love and Goodness have I abused? Sometimes look in and weep. Ah! what Motions did I withstand? What a good Spirit have I grieved? Ah! my Soul, thou wouldst have abhorred thyself, thou couldst never have borne it, had thine Heart been as stupid and as relentless then as now. If ever a poor Soul had Reason to dissolve itself into Tears for its sad Relapses, I have.

2. BUT yet mourn not as one without Hope. Remember, *There is Hope in Israel concerning this Thing.* As low as thy Condition is, it is not desperate, it is not a Disease that scorns a Remedy; many a Man that hath been stretched out for dead, hath revived, and lived many a comfortable Day in the World; many a Tree that hath cast both Leaf and Fruit, by the Skill of a prudent Husbandman, hath been recovered, and made flourishing and fruitful. Is it not easier to recover a languishing Man to Health, than a dead Man to Life? And yet this God did for me, *Eph. ii. 1.* Is any Thing too hard for the LORD? *Though my Soul draw nigh unto the Pit, and my Life to the Destroyers, yet He can send me a Messenger, one among a Thousand, that shall declare to me my Uprightness; then shall He deliver me from going down into the Pit, my Flesh shall be fresher than a Child's, and I shall return to the Days of my Youth, Job xxxiii. 22.* Though my Flourish, and much of my Fruit too be gone, and I am a withering Tree; yet as long as the Root of the Matter is in me, there is more Hope of such a poor, decayed, withered Tree, than of the Hypocrite, that wants such a Root, in all his Glory and Bravery. His Sun shall set, and  
never



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never rise again; but I live in Expectation of a sweet Morning, after this dark Night,

Rouze up therefore, O my Soul, set thy Faith to Work on *Christ* for quickning Grace, for He hath Life in Himself, and quickens whomsoever He will. Stir up that little which remains. Hast thou not seen lively Flames proceed from dying Sparks, when carefully collected and blown up? Get amongst the most lively Christians; as Iron sharpens Iron, so will these set an Edge upon thy dull Affections.

BUT above all, cry mightily to the LORD for Quickening, for He will not despise thy Cry. The Moans of a distressed Child, work upon the Bowels of a tender Father. And be sure to keep within thy View, the great Things of Eternity, which are ready to be revealed; live in the believing and serious Contemplations of them, and be dead if thou canst. It is true, thou hast Reason enough, from thy Condition, to be for ever humbled; but no Reason at all from GOD, to be in the least discouraged.



CHAP. VI.

Upon the Uncurableness of some bad Ground.

*No Skill can mend the miry Ground, and sure  
Some Souls the Gospel leaves as past a Cure.*

OBSERVATION.

**A**LTHOUGH the Industry and Skill of the Husbandman can make some Ground that was useless and bad, good for Tillage or Pasture, yet such is the Nature of some rocky or miry Ground, that it never can be made fruitful. The Husbandman is fain to let it alone, as an incurable Piece of waste and worthless Ground; and though the Sun and Clouds shed their Influences on it, as well as upon better Land, yet that doth not at all mend it. Nay, the more Showers it receives, the worse it proves. For these do no Way improve it; nothing thrives there, but worthless Flags and Rushes.

APPLICATION.

MANY also there are under the Gospel, who are given over by God to judicial Blindness, Hardness of Heart, a reprobate Sense, and perpetual Barrenness; so that how excellent soever the Means are which they enjoy, and how efficacious

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foever to the Salvation of others; yet they never do their Souls good, *Ezek. xlvii. 9, 11. Every Thing wheresoever the River comes shall live, but the miry Places thereof, and the Marshes thereof shall never be healed, but be given to Salt; (i. e.)* given to an obstinate and everlasting Barrenness. Men that live unfruitfully under all God's Ordinances, are compared to miry and marshy Places in three Respects.

(1.) IN miry Places the Water hath not free Passage, but stands and settles there. So it is with these barren Souls; therefore the Apostle prays, that the Gospel may run and be glorified, *2 Thes. iii. 1.* The Word is said to run, when it meets with no Stop, when it is freely propagated, and runs through the whole Man; when it meets with no Stop either in the Mouth of the Speaker; or Hearts of the Hearers, as it doth in these.

(2.) IN a miry Place, the Earth and Water is mixed together; this Mixture makes Mire. So it is when the Truths of God mix with the Corruptions of Men; they either hold some Truths, and yet live in their Lusts; or else make Use of the Truths of God to justify their Sins. Or,

(3.) IN a miry Place, the longer the Water stands, the worse it grows; so the longer some Men abide under God's Ordinances, the more filthy and polluted they grow: These are the miry Places that cannot be healed, their Disease is incurable, desperate.

CHRIST executes by the Gospel that Curse upon many Souls, which He denounced against the Fig-Tree, *Matt. xxi. 19. Let no Fruit grow on thee henceforth for ever, and immediately the Fig-tree withered.*



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withered away. To be given up to such a Condition, is a fearful Judgment indeed, the Sum of all Plagues, Miseries, and Judgments. To be barren under the Gospel is a sore Judgment, but to have a pertinacious Barrenness; this is to be twice dead, and plucked up by the Root, as *Jude* speaks.

AND to shew you the miserable State of such Men, let the following Particulars be weighed.

(1.) IT is a Stroke at the Soul it self, an inward spiritual Judgment; and by how much the more inward and spiritual any Judgment is, so much the more dreadful and lamentable. If it were but a Temporal Stroke upon the Body, the Loss of an Eye, an Ear, a Hand, a Foot, though in it self it would be a considerable Loss; yet it were Nothing to this. God hath given Men double Members, two Eyes, if one be lost, the other supplies its Wants; two Hands, two Ears, two Feet, that the Failing of one, may be supplied by the Help of the other; but one Soul, if that perish, there is not another to supply its Loss. The Soul, saith a *Heathen*, is the Man, that which is not seen is the Man. The Apostle calls the Body, a vile Body, *Phil. iii. 21.* and so it is compared with the Soul. O it were far better that many Bodies perish, than one Soul; that every Member were made the Seat, and Subject of the most exquisite Torture, than such a Judgment should fall upon the Soul.

(2.) IT is the severest Stroke God can inflict upon the Soul in this Life, to give it up to Barrenness; because it cuts off all Hopes, frustrates all Means, nothing can be a Blessing to him. If one come from the Dead, if Angels should descend from Heaven to preach to him; there is no

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Hope of him. As there was none found in Heaven or Earth that could open the Seals of that Book, *Rev. v. 5.* So is there no opening by the Hand of the most able Ministry, those Seals of Hardness, Blindness, and Unbelief, thus impressed upon the Spirit. Whom Justice so locks up, Mercy will never let out.

(3.) It is the most indiscernable Stroke to themselves that can be, and by that so much the more desperate. Hence there is said to be poured out upon them the Spirit of Slumber, *Isa. xxix. 10.* *The LORD hath poured out upon you the Spirit of deep Sleep;* *Montanus* renders it, *The LORD hath mingled upon you the Spirit of deep Sleep.* And so it is an Allusion to a soporiferous Medicine mingled, and made up of *Opium*, and such like stupifactive Ingredients, which casts a Man into such a dead Sleep, that do what you will to him, he feels, he knows it not. For Men are not sensible at all of this Judgment, they do not in the least suspect it, and that is their Misery. Though they be cursed Trees which never bear Fruit to Life, yet many Times they bear Abundance of other fair and pleasant Fruits to the Eye, excellent Gifts, and rare Endowments; and these deceive and undo them. *Matt. vii. 22.* *We have prophesied in thy Name;* this makes the Wound desperate, that there is no finding of it, no Probe to search it.

Lastly, It is such a Stroke of God upon the Souls of Men, as immediately fore-runs Hell and Damnation, *Heb. vi. 8.* *That which beareth Thorns and Briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose End is to be burnt.* So that as the Saints in this World, have a Foretaste of Heaven, which the Scripture calls the *Earnest of Spirit*; so this is a Precursor

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Precursor of Hell, a Sign of Wrath at the Door. We may say of it, as it is said of the pale Horse in the *Revelations*, that Hell follows it. *If a Man abide not in me, (saith Christ) John xvi. 6. He is cast forth as a Branch and withered;* which is the very State of these barren, cursed Souls. And what follows? Why, saith He, *Men gather them, and cast them into the Fire, and they are burned,* Lo, this is the Vengeance which the Gospel executes upon this barren Ground.

### REFLECTIONS.

I. WELL then, blessed be God, may the sincere Soul say, that made me feel the saving Power of the Gospel. O, let God be exalted for ever for this Mercy! that how defective soever I am in other Gifts, though I have a dull Understanding, a leaking Memory, a stammering Tongue; yet I have felt, and do feel the Power of the Gospel upon my Heart. I bless Thee (my God) that although I labour under many spiritual Infirmities, yet I am not sick of this incurable Disease. I have given Thee indeed just Cause to inflict this dreadful Curse upon me also, but Thou hast not dealt with me after my Deserts; but according to the Riches of thy Mercy. Some little Fruit I bring forth, and what it is, is by Virtue of my Union with *Jesus Christ*. And this hath more in it to my Comfort, than all the glittering Gifts and splendid Performances in the World. If I might have my Choice (saith one) I would chuse the most despicable and sordid Work of a rustick Christian, before all the Victories of *Alexander*, and Triumphs of *Cæsar*. *Blessed therefore be the LORD, who hath abounded unto me, in all spiritual Blessings, in heavenly Things in Christ Jesus.*



I CANNOT remember a Sermon as another can, but blessed be GOD that I am able to savour it, and feel it; that I have an Heart to love, and a Will to obey, all that GOD discovers to be my Duty.

2. O, THEN how little Cause have I, may the Formalist say, to make my Boast of Ordinances, and glory in my external Priviledges, who never bear spiritual Fruit under them? If I well consider my Condition, there is Matter of Trembling, and not of Glorifying in these Things. It may be, while I have been glorying in them, and lifting up my Heart upon them, the LORD hath been secretly blasting my Soul under them, and insensibly executing this horrible Curse. Shall I boast, that with *Capernaum* I am lifted up to Heaven, since I may with her at last be cast down to Hell? And if so, LORD, what a Hell will my Hell be! It will be more tolerable for *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* than for me. It drew Tears from the Eyes of *Christ*, when He was looking upon *Jerusalem*, under the same Consideration that I doubt I have cause to look upon my own Soul, *Luke xix. 41.* *He wept over it, saying, If thou badst known, even thou, at least in this thy Day, the Things which belong to thy Peace; but now they are hid from thine Eyes.* So long I have been a Hearer of the Gospel, so many Years I have enjoyed its distinguishing Ordinances; but have they not been all dry and empty Things to me; hath not the Spirit of Formality acted me in them? Sad is my Condition now, but it would be desperate and irrecoverable, shouldst thou execute this Curse upon me.

3. AND what may I think of my Condition? May the fruitless Christian say, LORD, I acknowledge my Unprofitableness under the Means hath been

been shameful; and this hath made my Condition doubtful. I have often trembled for Fear, lest my Root had been blasted by such a Curse; but if so, whence is this Trembling? Whence these Fears and Sorrows about it? Doth such Fruit grow in that Soil which Thou hast Cursed? LORD, I bless Thee for the Fruits of Fear, Sorrow, and holy Jealousy. The Laws of Men spare for the Fruits Sake, and wilt not Thou spare me also my GOD, if there be found in me a Blessing in the Bud, *Isa. lxx. 8.*

4. To conclude, what a serious Reflection should this occasion in every Dispenser of the Gospel? How should he say when he goes to preach, I am now going to preach that Word, which is to be a *Savour of Life or Death to these Souls*; upon how many of my poor Hearers may the Curse of perpetual Barrenness be executed this Day! O how should such a Thought melt his Heart into Compassion over them, and make him beg hard, and plead earnestly with GOD for a better Issue of the Gospel than this upon them!





## C H A P. VII.

## Upon the Plowing of Corn-land.

*The Plowman guides his Plow with Care and Skill,  
So doth the Spirit in sound Conviction still.*

## O B S E R V A T I O N.

**I**T requires not only Strength, but Skill and Judgment, to manage and guide the Plow. The Hebrew Word which we translate to Plow, signifies to be intent, as an Artificer is about some curious Piece of Work. The Plow must neither go too shallow nor too deep in the Earth; it must not indent the Ground by making crooked Furrows, nor leap and make Baulks in good Ground; but be guided as to a just Depth of Earth, so to cast the Furrow in a strait Line, that the Floor or Surface of the Field may be made plain. And hence that Expression, *Luke ix. 62. He that puts his Hand to the Plow, and looks back, is not fit for the Kingdom of Heaven.* The meaning is, that as he that plows, must have his Eyes always forward, to guide and direct his Hand in casting the Furrows strait and even; (for his Hand will be quickly out when his Eye is off) so he that heartily resolves for Heaven, must addict himself wholly and intently to the Business of Religion, and not



not have his Mind intangled with the Things of this World, which he hath left behind him; whereby it appears, that the right Management of the Plow, requires as much Skill as Strength.

*APPLICATION.*

THIS Observation in Nature, serves excellently to shadow forth this Proposition in Divinity. That the Work of the Spirit in convincing and humbling the Heart, is a Work wherein much of the Wisdom, as well as Power of God is discovered. The Work of Repentance, is set forth in Scripture by this Metaphor of Plowing, *Jer. iv. 3. Hos. x. 12. Plow up your fallow Ground*; that is, be convinced, humble, and broken-hearted for Sin. And the Resemblance betwixt both these Works, appears in the following Particulars.

(1.) IT is a hard and difficult Work to Plow, it is reckoned one of the painfullest manual Labours. It is also a hard Thing to convince and humble the Heart of a secure, stout, and proud Sinner. What *Luther* saith of a dejected Soul, *That it is as easy to raise the Dead, as to comfort such a one.* The same I may say of the secure, confident Sinner. It is as easy to rend the Rocks, as to work saving Contrition upon such a Heart. All the melting Language and earnest Intreaties of the Gospel, cannot urge such a Heart to shed a Tear: Therefore it is called a Heart of Stone, *Ezek. xxxvi. 26. a firm Rock, Amos vi. 12. Shall Horses run upon the Rocks? Will one plow there with Oxen?* Yet when the LORD comes in the Power of his Spirit, these Rocks rend and yield to the Power of the Word.

(2.) THE

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(2.) THE Plow pierces deep into the Bosom of the Earth, makes (as it were) a deep Gash or Wound in the Heart of it, So doth the Spirit upon the Hearts of Sinners; he pierces their very Souls by Conviction, *Acts ii. 37. When they heard this, they were pricked (or pierced point-blank) to the Heart. Then the Word divides the Soul and Spirit.* It comes upon the Conscience with such piercing *Dilemmas*, and drives the Sword of Conviction so deep into their Souls, that there is no stanching the Blood, no healing this Wound, till *Christ Himself* come and undertake the Cure. This barbed Arrow cannot be pulled out of their Hearts by any, but the Hand that shot it in. Discourse with such a Soul about his Troubles, and he will tell you, that all the Sorrows that ever he had in this World, Loss of Estate, Health, Children, or whatever else, are but Flea-bitings to this; this swallows up all our Troubles. *Now Deep calleth upon Deep at the Noise of his Water-sprouts, when the Waves and Billows of GOD go over the Soul.* Spiritual Sorrows are deep Waters, in which the stoutest Soul would sink and drown, did not *Jesus Christ* by a secret and supporting Hand, hold it up by the Chin.

(3.) THE Plow rends the Earth in Pieces, which before was united, and makes those Parts hang loose, which formerly lay close. Thus doth the Spirit of Conviction rend in sunder the Heart, and its most beloved Lusts, *Joel ii. 13. Rent your Hearts, and not your Garments!* that is, rather than your Garments. And this Rending implies not only Pain; Flesh cannot be rent asunder without Anguish; nor yet only Force; the Heart is stubborn and knotty, and will not easily yield; but it also implies a Disunion of Parts united: As when a Garment, or the Earth is rent; those

Parts

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Parts are separated which formerly cleaved together. Sin and the Soul were glewed fast together before, there was no parting of them, they would as soon part with their Lives as their Lusts; but now when the Heart is rent *for* them truly, it is also rent *from* them.

(4.) THE Plow discovers such Things as lay hid in the Bosom of the Earth before, and covered under a fair green Surface. Thus when the LORD plows up the Heart of a Sinner by Conviction, then the Secrets of his Heart are made manifest, 2 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. the most secret and shameful Sins will then out; for *the Word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged Sword, piercing even to the dividing of the Soul and Spirit, the Joints and Marrow, and is a Discerner of the Thoughts and Intentions of the Heart, Heb. iv. 12.* It makes the Fire burn inwardly, so that, the Soul hath no Rest till Confession give a Vent to Trouble. Fain would the Sinner conceal and hide his Shame, but the Word follows him through all his sinful Shifts, and brings him at last to be his own, both Accuser, Witness, and Judge.

(5.) THE Work of the Plow is but a preparative Work in order to Fruit. Should the Husbandman Plow his Ground never so often, yet if the Seed be not cast in and quickened, in Vain is the Harvest expected. Thus Conviction also is but preparative to a farther Work upon the Soul of a Sinner. If it go no farther, it proves but an abortive or untimely Birth. Many have gone thus far, and there they have stuck; they have been like a Field plowed, but not sowed, which is a Matter of trembling Consideration; for hereby their Sin is greatly aggravated, and their eternal Misery so much the more increased. When a  
poor



poor damned Creature shall reflect upon himself in Hell, how near was I once under such a Sermon to Conversion? My Sins were set in Order before me, my Conscience awakened and terrified with the Guilt of them; many Purposes I had then to turn to God, which had they been perfected by answerable Executions, I had never come to this Place of Torment; but there I stuck, and that was my eternal Undoing. Many Souls have I known so terrified with the Guilt of Sin, that they have come roaring under Horrors of Conscience to the Preacher; so that one would think such a Breach had been made betwixt them and Sin as could never be reconciled; and yet as angry as they were in that Fit with Sin, they have hugged and embraced it again.

(6.) It is best Plowing when the Earth is prepared and mollified by Showers, then the Work goes on sweetly and easily. And never doth the Heart so kindly melt, as when the Gospel Clouds dissolve, and the free Grace and Love of *Jesus Christ* comes sweetly showing down upon it; then it relents and mourns, *Ezek. xvi. 63* *That thou mayst remember, and be confounded, and never open thy Mouth any more because of thy Shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done.* So it was with that poor Penitent, *Luke vii. 38.* when the *LORD Jesus* had discovered to her the Riches of his Grace, in the Pardon of her manifold Abominations; her Heart melted within her, she washed the Feet of *Christ* with Tears. And indeed, there is as much Difference betwixt the Tears which are forced by the Terrors of the Law, and those which are extracted by the Grace of the Gospel, as there is betwixt those of a condemned Malefactor, who weeps to consider the Misery he is under, and those of a pardoned Malefactor,

lesactor, that is melted by the Mercy of his gracious Prince towards him.

(7.) THE Plow kills those rank Woods which grew in the Field, turns them up by the Roots, buries and rots them. So doth thorough Conviction kill Sin at the Root, makes the Soul sick of it, begets Indignation in the Heart against it, 2 Cor. vii. 11. The Word *Ayaxánow* there signifies the Rising of the Stomach, and being angry even unto Sickness: Now the Soul cannot endure Sin, trembles at it. *I find a Woman more bitter than Death,* (saith penitent Solomon) *Eccles. vii. 26.* Conviction like a Surfeit, makes the Soul to loath what it formerly loved and delighted in.

(8.) THAT Field is not well plowed, where the Plow jumps and skips, and makes Baulks, it must turn up the whole Field alike; and that Heart is not savingly convicted where any Lust is spared and left untouched. True Conviction extends itself to all Sins, not only to Sin in general, with this cold Confession, *I am a Sinner*; but to the Particulars of Sin; yea, to the particular Circumstances and Aggravations of Time, Place, Manner, Occasions, thus and thus have I done; to the Sin of *Nature*, as well as *Practice*, *Behold I was shapen in Iniquity, Psal. li. 5.* There must be no baulking of any Sin; the sparing of one Sin, is a sure Argument thou art not truly humbled for any Sin. So far is the convinced Soul from a studious Concealment of a beloved Sin, that it weeps over that more than over any other actual Sin.

(9.) NEW Ground is much more easily plowed than that which by long lying out of Tillage, is more clung together, by deep-rooted Thorns and Brambles, which render it difficult to the Plow-

man. This old Ground is like an old Sinner, that hath lain a long Time hardening under the Means of Grace. O the Difficulty of convincing such a Person! Sin hath got such Rooting in his Heart, he is so habituated to the Reproofs and Calls of the Word, that few such are wrought upon. How many young Persons are called to one obdurate, inveterate Sinner? I do not say but God may call Home such a Soul at the eleventh Hour; but I may say of these, compared with others, as *Solomon* speaks, *Eccles. vii. 28. One Man among a Thousand have I found.* Few that have long resisted the Gospel, that come afterwards to feel the saving Efficacy thereof.

### REFLECTIONS.

I. O GRACE, for ever to be admired! May the real Convert say, that God should send forth his Word and Spirit to plow up my hard and stony Heart! O blessed Gospel! Heart-dissolving Voice! I have felt thy Efficacy, I have experienced thy Divine Power; Thou art indeed sharper than any two-edged Sword, and woundest to the Heart; but thy Wounds are the Wounds of a Friend. All the Wounds Thou hast made in my Soul, were so many Doors opened to let in *Christ*; all the Blows Thou gavest my Conscience, were but to beat off my Soul from Sin, which I embraced and had retained to my everlasting Ruin, hadst not Thou separated them and me. O wife and merciful Physician, Thou didst indeed bind me with Cords of Conviction and Sorrow; but it was only to cut out that Stone in my Heart, which had killed me if it had continued there. How did I struggle and oppose Thee, as if Thou hadst come with the Sword of an Enemy, rather than the Lancet of a skilful and tender-hearted Phy-



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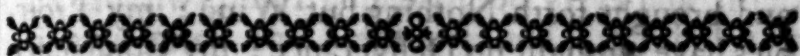
Physician? Blessed be the Day wherein my Sin was discovered and embittered! Happy Sorrows which prepared for such matchless Joys! O blessed Hand which turned my salt Waters into pleasant Wine! And after many Pangs didst bring forth Deliverance and Peace.

2. BUT O, what a Rock of Adamant is this Heart of mine, may the stubborn Heart say! that never yet was pierced for Sin by the Terrors of the Law, or melting Voice of the Gospel! Long have I sat under the Word, but when did I feel a relenting Pang? O my Soul! thou hast got an *Antidote* against Repentance, but hast thou any against Hell? Thou canst keep out the Sense of Sin now, but art thou able to keep off the Terrors of the LORD hereafter? If thou couldst turn a deaf Ear to the Sentence of *Christ* in the Day of Judgment, as easily as thou dost to the Entreaties of *Christ* in the Day of Grace, it were somewhat; but surely there is no Defence against that. Ah, Fool that I am, to quench these Convictions, unless I knew how to quench those Flames they warn me of!

3. AND may not I challenge the first Place among all the Mourners in the World, may the Backslider say, who have lost all those Convictions which at several Times came upon me under the Word? I have been often awakened by it, and filled with Terrors and Tremblings under it; but those Troubles have soon worn off again, and my Heart (like Water removed from the Fire) returned to its native Coldness. LORD, what a dismal Case am I in? Many Convictions have I choaked and strangled, which it may be shall never more be revived, until Thou revive them again.

gainst me in Judgment. I have been in Pangs, and brought forth Nothing but Wind; my Troubles have wrought no Deliverance; my Conscience indeed hath been sick with Sin, yea, so sick as to vomit them up by an external, partial Reformation; but then with the Dog, have I returned again to my Vomit, and now I doubt am given over to an Heart that cannot repent. O that those travelling Pangs could be quickened again! but alas! they are ceased. I am like a Prisoner escaped, and again recovered, whom the Jailor loads with double Irons. Surely, O my Soul! if thy Spiritual Troubles return not again, they are but gone back to bring eternal Troubles. It is with Thee, O my Soul! as with a Man whose Bones have been broken, and not well set; who must, (how terrible soever it appear to him) endure the Pain of breaking and setting them again, if ever he be made a sound Man. O that I might rather chuse to be the Object of thy wounding Mercy, than of thy sparing Cruelty! If Thou Plow not up my Heart again by Compunction, I know it must be rent in Pieces at last by Desperation.





C H A P. VIII.

Upon the Seed-Corn.

*The choicest Wheat is still reserv'd for Seed;*

*But gracious Principles are choice indeed.*

O B S E R V A T I O N.

**H**USBANDMEN are very careful about their Seed-Corn, that it may not only be clean and pure, but the best and most excellent in its Kind. If any be more full and weighty than other, that is reserved for Seed. It is usual with Husbandmen to pick their Seed-Corn by Hand, that they may separate the Cockle and Darnel, and all the lighter and hollow Grains from it, wherein they manifest their Discretion; for according to the Vigour and Goodness of the Seed, the Fruit and Production is like to be.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

**T**HE choice and principal Seed-Corn with which the Fields are sowed, after they are prepared for it, doth admirably shadow forth those excellent Principles of Grace infused into the regenerate Soul. Their Agreement, as they are both Seed, is obvious in the following Particulars,



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1. THE Earth at first naturally brought forth Corn, and every Seed yielding Fruit, without human Industry; but since the Curse came upon it, it must be plowed and sowed, or no Fruit can be expected. So Man at first had all the Principles of Holiness in his Nature, but now they must be infused by Regeneration, or else his Nature is as void of Holiness as the barren and untill'd Desert is of Corn.

2. FROSTS and SNOWS conduce much to the Well-rooting of the Seed, and makes it spread, and take Root the better. So do sanctified Afflictions, which usually the People of God meet with and often in their very Seed-Time.

3. WHEN the Seed is cast into the Earth, it must be covered up by the Harrow; the Use whereof in Husbandry, is not only to lay a plain Floor (as they speak) but to open and let in the Corn to the Bosom of the Earth, and there cover it up for its Security, from Birds that would devour it. Thus doth the most wise God provide for the Security of that Grace, which he at first disseminated in the Hearts of his People. He is as well the Finisher as the Author of their Grace.

4. THE Seed is fruitful in some Soils more than in others, prospers much better, and comes sooner to Maturity. So doth Grace thrive better, and grow faster in some Persons than in others. *Your Faith groweth exceedingly,* 2 Thes. i. 3. *Whilst the Things that are in others are ready to die,* Rev. iii. 2. Though no Man's Heart be naturally a kind Soil to Grace, yet doubtless Grace is more advantaged in some Dispositions than in others.

5. AND

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5. AND lastly, their Agreement as Seed appears in this, the Seed-Corn is scattered into all Parts of the Field, as proportionably and equally as may be. So is Grace diffus'd into all the Faculties, Judgment, Will, and all the Affections are sowed with these new Principles. *The God of Peace sanctify you wholly, 1 Thes. 5. 23.*

AND thus you see, why Principles of Grace are called Seed. In the next Place, I will shew the Excellency of these holy Principles, which will evidently appear in the following Particulars :

1. THE most excellent of other Gifts come out of the common Treasury of GOD's Bounty, and that in a natural Way. They are but the Improvement of a Man's natural Abilities, or (as one calls them) the Sparks of Nature blown up by the Wind of a more benign and liberal Education ; but Principles of Grace are of a Divine and Heavenly Extraction, not raised from Nature, but supernaturally infused by the Spirit from on high, *John iii. 6. That which is born of the Flesh is Flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.* When a Soul is sanctified by them, *he partakes of the Divine Nature, 2 Pet. i. 4. is born not of Flesh, nor of Blood, nor of the Will of Man, but of GOD, John i. 13.* In this Respect they differ from those, as the Manna which rained down from Heaven differ'd from common Bread.

2. GIFTS adorn the Person, but do not secure the Soul from Wrath. A Man may be admired for them amongst Men, and rejected eternally by GOD. *Matt. vii. 22.* We read, that many shall say to *Christ* in that Day, LORD, LORD, *have we not prophesied in thy Name, and in thy Name cast out Devils,* and yet themselves at last be cast out as a Prey

## 80 Husbandry Spiritualiz'd: Or,

a Prey to Devils. How divinely did *Balaam* speak and prophesy. What rare and excellent Parts had the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*? Who upon that Account were stiled the Princes of the World, *1 Cor. ii. 8.* These Things are so far from securing the Soul against the Wrath to come, that they often expose it unto Wrath, and are as Oil to increase the eternal Burnings; but now gracious Principles are as the Apostle calls them, *Heb. vi.* Things that accompany and have Salvation in them. These are the Things on which the Promises of Salvation run; Glory is by Promise made over to him that possesses them. There is but a little Point of Time betwixt him and the glorified Spirit above. And how inconsiderable a Matter is a little Time, which contracts and winds up apace? For now is our Salvation nearer than when we believed. And hence the Scriptures speak of them as already saved, *Rom. viii. 24.* *We are saved by Hope.*

3. GIFTS may damnify the Person that possesses them; and it may be better in Respect of a Man's own Condition he had never had them. Knowledge (saith the Apostle) puffeth up, *1 Cor. viii. 1.* makes the Soul proud and flatulent. It is a hard Thing to know much, and not to know it too much. The Saint's Knowledge is better than the Scholar's; for he hath his own Heart instead of a Commentary to help him. *Aristotle* said, A little Knowledge about heavenly Things, though conjectural, is better than much of earthly Things, though certain. *The World by Wisdom knew not God*, (saith the Apostle, *1 Cor. i. 21.*) (*i. e.*) Their Learning hanged in their Light, they were too wise to submit to the Simplicity of the Gospel.

4. SIN in the Reign and Power of it, may cohabit with the most excellent natural Gifts under the



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the same Roof, I mean in the same Heart. A Man may have the Tongue of an Angel, and the Heart of a Devil. The Wisdom of the Philosophers (saith *Lactantius*) did not root out, but hide their Vices. The learned *Pharisees* were but painted Sepulchers; Gifts are but as a fair Glove drawn over a foul Hand. But now Grace is incompatible with Sin in Dominion; it purifies the Heart, *Acts* xv. 9. Cleanses the Conscience, *Heb.* ix. 14. Crucifies the Affections and Lusts of the Flesh, *Gal.* 5. 24. Is not content with the Concealment, but Ruin of Corruptions.

5. AND lastly, Gifts must leave us at last. *Whether there be Knowledge, that shall cease. All Flesh is Grass, and the Goodliness of it as the Flower of the Grass; the Grass withers, the Flower fadeth, but the Word of the LORD abideth for ever, Isa.* xl. 6, 8. Many Times they leave a Man before Death. One Knock, may make a wise Man a Fool. But to be sure, they all leave us at Death. *Doth not his Excellency which is in him go away?* *Job* iv. 21. yea, then all natural Excellency departs. Death strips the Soul of all those splendid Ornaments, then the rhetorical Tongue is struck dumb; the nimble Wit and curious Fancy shall entertain your Ears with no more pleasant Discourses. But Grace ascends with the Soul into Eternity, and there receives its Perfection and Accomplishment. Gifts take their Leave of the Soul, as *Orpha* did of *Naomi*; but Grace saith then as *Ruth*, *Where thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge, and nothing shall separate thee and me.* Now put all this together, and then judge whether the Apostle spake Hyperboles, when he said, *Covet earnestly the best Gifts, and yet I shew unto you a more excellent Way.*

## REFLECTIONS.

THE Lines are fallen to me in a pleasant Place, may the Believer say. How defective soever I am in Gifts, yet blessed be the LORD, who hath sown the Seeds of true Grace in my Heart. What though I am not honoured among Men, let it suffice that I am precious in the Eyes of the LORD. Though He hath not abounded to me in Gifts of Nature, yet *blessed be the GOD and Father of my LORD Jesus Christ, who hath abounded to me in all spiritual Blessings, in heavenly Places, in Christ Jesus, Eph. i. 3.* Is not a true Jewel, though spurn'd in the Dirt, more precious than a false one, though set in Gold? Why art thou troubled, O my Soul, for the Want of these Things which Unbelievers may have? And art not rather admiring and blessing GOD for those Things which none but the Favourites of Heaven can have? Is not an Ounce of pure Gold more valuable than many Pounds of gilded Brasa? What though the Dews of *Helicon* descend not upon my Head, if in the mean Time the sweet Influences of *Sion* fall upon my Heart? O my GOD! how much soever others are elated by the Light of their Knowledge, I have Cause with Humility to adore Thee for the heavenly Heat with which Thou hast warmed my Affections.

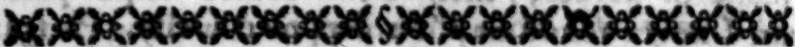
PAUSE a while my Soul upon this Point, may the Deceiver say. With what Seed is my Heart sown, and of what Kind are those Things wherein I excell others? Are they indeed Seeds of Grace, or natural Excellencies? If the latter, little Cause have I to pride myself in them, were they Ten Thousand Times more than they are. If these Things be indeed the Things that accompany Salva-

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Salvation, the Seed of GOD, the true and real Work of Grace, then how comes it to pass that I never found any Throws or travelling Pangs in the Production of them? It is generally acknowledged, that a new Creature is never brought forth without such Pains and Compunctions of Heart, *Acts* ii. 37. I have indeed often felt an aching Head, whilst I have read and studied to increase my Knowledge; but when did I feel an aching Heart for Sin! Oh, I begin to suspect, that it is not right. Yea, and my Suspicion increases while I consider that Grace is of an humbling Nature. LORD, how have I been elated by my Gifts, and valued myself above what was meet? Say, O my Conscience, have I not delighted more in the Praise of Men, than the Approbation of GOD? Oh, how many Evidences dost Thou produce against me? Indeed these are sad Symptoms that I have shewed thee, but there is yet another which renders thy Case more suspicious yet; yea, that which thou canst make no rational Defence against, even the Ineffectualness of all thy Gifts and Knowledge to mortify any one of all thy Lusts. It is beyond all Dispute, that Gifts may, but Grace cannot consist without Mortification of Sin, *Gal.* v. 24. Now what Lust hath fallen before these excellent Parts of mine? Doth not Pride, Passion, Covetousness, and indeed the whole Body of Sin live and thrive in me as much as ever? LORD, I yield the Cause, I can defend it no longer against my Conscience, which casts and condemns me by full Proof, to be but in a wretched, cursed State, notwithstanding all my Knowledge and Gifts. O shew me a more excellent Way. LORD! that I had the Sincerity of the poorest Saint; tho' I should lose the Applause of all my Parts: With these I see I may go to Hell, but without some better Thing, no Hope of Heaven.

C H A P.





CHAP. IX.

*Upon Springing Weather after Seed-Time.*

*By Heavens kind Influence, Corn and Plants do spring;  
God's Showers of Grace do make his Vallies sing.*

OBSERVATION.

**T**HE Earth after it is plowed and sowed, must be watered and warm'd with the Dews and Influences of Heaven, or no Fruit can be expected. If God do not open to you his good Treasure, the Heavens to give Rain unto the Land in its Season, and bless all the Work of your Hands. The Earth cannot yield her Increase. The Order and Dependance of natural Causes in the Productions of Fruit, is excellently described, *Hos. ii. 21, 22. I will bear the Heavens, and they shall bear the Earth; and the Earth shall bear the Corn, and Wine, and Oil, and they shall bear Jezreel.* Jezreel must have Corn, and Wine, and Oil, or they cannot live; they cannot have it, unless the Earth bring it forth; the Earth cannot bring it forth without the Heavens; the Heavens cannot yield a Drop unless God hear them; that is, unlock and open them. Nature and natural Causes are nothing else but the Order in which God works. This some Heathens acknowledged, and therefore when they went to plow in the Morning, they did lay one Hand upon the

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the Plow (to speak their own Part to be Painfulness) and hold up the other Hand to *Ceres* the Goddess of Corn, to shew, that their Expectation of Plenty was from their supposed Deity. I fear many Christians lay both Hands to the Plow, and seldom lift up Heart or Hand to God, when about that Work. There was an Husbandman (saith Mr. *Smith*) that always sowed good Seed, but never had good Corn; at last, a Neighbour came to him, and said, I will tell you what probably may be the Cause of it; it may be (said he) you do not steep your Seed; no truly, said the other, nor ever did I hear that Seed must be steeped; yes surely, said his Neighbour, and I will tell you how, it must be steeped in Prayer. When the Party heard this, he thanked him for his Counsel, reformed his Fault, and had as good Corn as any Man whatsoever. Surely, it is not the Husbandman's, but God's Steps that drop Fatness. The Earth indeed is a fruitful Mother, but the Rain which fertilizes it, hath no other Father but God.

### *A P P L I C A T I O N.*

As impossible it is (in an ordinary Way) for Souls to be made fruitful in Grace and Holiness, without the Dews and Influences of Ordinances, and the Blessing of God upon them, as for the Earth to yield her Fruit without the natural Influences of Heaven; for what Dews, Showers, and clear Shinings after Rain are to the Fields, that the Word and Ordinances of God are to the Souls of Men. *My Doctrine shall drop as the Rain, my Speech shall distil as the Dew, as the small Rain upon the tender Herb, and as the Showers upon the Grass, Deut. xxxii. 2. For as the Rain and Snow cometh down from Heaven, and watereth the Earth,*

and maketh it bring forth and bud; so shall my Word be that goeth forth of my Mouth, Isa. lv. 10, 11. And as the Doctrine of the Gospel is Rain, so Gospel Ministers are the Clouds in which those heavenly Vapours are bound up. The Resemblance lies in the following Particulars:

1. THE Rain comes from Heaven, *Acts* xiv. 17. *He gave us Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seasons.* The Doctrine of the Gospel is also of an heavenly Extraction, they are heavenly Truths which are brought to you in earthen Vessels, Things that were hid in God, and come from his Bosom. What *Nicodemus* said of *Christ*, is in a Proportion true of every faithful Dispenser of the Gospel, *Thou art a Teacher come from God.* You are not to look upon the Truths which Ministers deliver, as the mere Fruits of their Inventions, they are but the Conduits through which those celestial Waters are conveyed to you. It is all heavenly, the Officers from Heaven, *Eph.* iv. 12. Their Doctrine from Heaven, *Eph.* iii. 8, 9. The Efficacy and Success of it from Heaven, *1 Cor.* iii. 3. *What I received of the LORD (saith Paul) that have I delivered unto you, 1 Cor.* xi. 23. The same may every Gospel Minister say too.

2. THERE is a great deal of Difference in the Showers of Rain that fall upon the Earth. Sometimes you have an hasty Shower, which makes the Streets run, but it is gone presently, the Earth hath but little Benefit by it; and sometimes you have a sweet, gentle Rain, that moderately soaks to the Root, and refreshes the Earth abundantly. This is called the small Rain, and the former, the great Rain of his Strength. So it is in these Spiritual Showers; the Effects of some Sermons, (like a sudden Spout of Rain) are transient, that

touch



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touch the Heart a little for the present, by Way of Conviction or Comfort, but it fleets away immediately. At other Times the Gospel, like a settled moderate Rain, soaks to the Root, to the very Heart. So did that sweet Shower which fell, *Act. ii. 37.* It searched the Root, it went to the Heart; the Influences of it are sometimes abiding, and longer remain in and refresh the Heart, than the Rain doth the Earth. There be Effects left in some Hearts, by some Sermons and Duties, that will never out of it as long as they live.

THE Rain is most beneficial to the Earth, when there come sweet, warm Sun-blasts with, or after it. This the Scripture calls, *a clear Shining after Rain*, by which the seminal Virtue of the Earth is drawn forth, and then the Herbs, and Flowers, and Corn sprout abundantly. So it is with Gospel-Showers, when the Sun of Righteousness opens upon poor Souls under the Word, darting down the Beams of Grace and Love upon them, whilst they are attending on it, just as you sometimes see a sweet Shower fall while the Sun shines out; O how comfortable is this, and effectual to melt the Heart! And as the warm Rain is most refreshing, so when the Word comes warmly, from the melting Affections of the Preacher, who imparts not only the Gospel, but his own Soul with it, *1 Thes. ii. 8.* This doth abundantly more Good than that which drops coldly from the Lips of the unaffected Speaker.

3. RAIN is necessary at Seed-time, to make ready the Earth, to receive the Seed, *Psal. lxxv. 9, 10.* *Thou visitest the Earth, and waterest it; thou greatly enrichest it with the River of God, which is full of Water; Thou preparest them Corn, when Thou hast so provided for it; Thou waterest the Ridges thereof*

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*thereof abundantly, Thou settest the Furrows thereof, Thou makest it soft with Showers, Thou blessest the Springing thereof. And this the Scripture calls the former Rain. And as this is necessary about Seed-time, so the latter Rain is as needful about Earing-time, to disclose the Ear, and to bring it to Perfection; both these are great Blessings to the Earth, and conduce to a plentiful Harvest, Joel ii. 23, 24. Be glad then, ye Children of Sion, and rejoice in the LORD your GOD, for He hath given you the former Rain moderately, and He will cause to come down for you the Rain, the former and the latter Rain in the first Month, and the Floors shall be full of Wheat, and the Fat shall overflow with Wine and Oil.*

THUS the Gospel hath a double Use and Benefit also. It is necessary as the former Rain at Seed-time; it causes the first Spring of Grace in the Heart; and there could be (in an ordinary Way) no Spring of Grace without it. And as this former Rain is necessary to cause the first Spring of Grace, so also it hath the Use of the latter Rain to ripen those precious Fruits of the Spirit in the Souls of Believers, Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13. *He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers; for the Perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the Edifying the Body of Christ, 'till we all come in the Unity of the Faith, and the Knowledge of the Son of GOD, to a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fullness of Christ.*

4. To conclude. The Prayers of the Saints are the Keys that open and shut the natural Clouds, and cause them either to give out or withhold their Influences, James v. 18. *Elias was a Man subject to like Passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on*

*the*

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*the Earth by the Space of three Years and six Months; and he prayed again, and the Heavens gave Rain, and the Earth brought forth Fruit. God hath subjected the Works of his Hands to the Prayers of his Saints, Isaiah xlv. 11.*

PRAYER is also the golden Key which opens these mystical Gospel-clouds, and dissolves them into gracious Showers. GOD will have the whole Work of the Ministry carried on by the Prayers of his People, they first obtain their Ministers by Prayer, *Luke x. 2. Pray ye the LORD of the Harvest, to send forth Labourers into the Vineyard.* It is by the Help of Prayer, that they are carried on, and enabled to exercise their Ministry. They may tell their People, as a General once told his Soldiers, That he flew upon their Wings. *Pray for me (saith the great Apostle) that Utterance may be given me, that I may open my Mouth boldly, to make known the Mysteries of the Gospel, Eph. vi. 19.* Yea, by the Saints Prayers it is, that Ministers obtain the Success and Fruits of their Labours, *2 Thes. iii. 1. Finally, Brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the LORD may have free Course, and be glorified, even as it is with you.*

### REFLECTIONS.

1. AM I then a Cloud, may the Gospel Minister say? And is my Doctrine as Rain to water the LORD's Inheritance? And yet do I think it much to be tossed up and down by the furious Winds and Storms of Persecution? Do I not see the Clouds above me in continual Motions and Agitations? And shall I dream of a fixed settled State? No; false Teachers, who are Clouds without Rain, are more likely to enjoy that than I. Which of all the Prophets have not been tossed and hurried worse



than I? *Acts vii. 52.* He that will not let Men alone to be quiet in their Lusts, must expect but little Quiet from Men in this Life. But it is enough, **LORD**, that a Rest remaineth for thy Servant; let me be so wise to secure a Rest to come, and not so vain to expect it on Earth.

2. **AND**, O that I might study those instructing Clouds, from which, as from the Bottles of Heaven, **GOD** pours down refreshing Showers to satisfy the thirsty Earth! In this may I resemble them, and come amongst the People of the **LORD**, *in the Fulness of the Blessing of the Gospel of Christ, Rom. xv. 29.* O let not those thirsty Souls, *that wait for me as for the Rain, return like the Troops of Tema, ashamed with their Heads covered!* *Job vi. 19.* O that my Lips may refresh many! Let me never be like those empty Clouds, which deceive the Hopes of thirsty Souls; but let my Doctrine descend as the Rain, and distill as the Dew, and let that Plot of thine Inheritance which Thou hast assigned to me, be as a Field which the **LORD** hath blessed.

3. **ONCE** more, lift up thine Eyes to the Clouds, and behold to how great an Height the Sun hath mounted them, for by Reason of their Sublimity it is that they are called the Clouds of Heaven. **LORD**, let me be a Cloud of Heaven too! Let my Heart and Conversation be both there! Who is more advantaged for a heavenly Life than I? Heavenly Truths are the Subjects of my daily Study, and shall earthly Things be the Objects of my Delight and Love? **GOD** forbid that ever my earthly Conversation should contradict my heavenly Calling and Profession. Shine forth, Thou glorious Sun of Righteousness, and my Heart shall quickly

mount

mount above these visible Clouds, yea, and above the aspectable Heavens.

(1.) Is the Gospel Rain, and its Ministers Clouds, may those that want a Gospel Ministry say? Woe is me then, that my Habitation is upon the Mountains of *Gilboa*, where there are no Dews! Ah sad Lot, that I should be like *Gideon's* dry Fleece, whilst the Ground round about me is wet with the Dew of Heaven! O Thou that commandest the Clouds above, and openest the Windows of Heaven, remember and refresh this parched Wilderness wherein I live, with Showers of Grace, that we may not be as the Heath in the Desert, which seeth not when Good cometh, nor inhabit the parched Places of the Wilderness.

(2.) O LORD, Thou hast caused the Heavens above me to be black with Clouds, may those that enjoy a Gospel Ministry say; Thou openest the celestial Casements from above, and daily sendest down Showers of Gospel Blessings; O that I might be as the parched Earth under them! not for Barrenness, but for Thirstiness. Let me say, *My Soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the Courts of the LORD.* Doth the spongy Earth so greedily suck up the Showers, and open as many Mouths as there are Clefts in it, to receive what the Clouds dispense? And shall those precious Soul-enriching Showers fleet away unprofitably from me? If so, then,

(3.) WHAT an Account have I to make for all those Gospel Blessings that I have enjoyed? For all those Gospel Dews and Showers wherewith I have been watered? Should I be found fruitless at last, it will fare better with the barren and uncultivated Wilderness than with me; more tolerable for *Indians*

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*dians and Barbarians* that never heard the Gospel, than for me that have been so plenteously watered by it. LORD, what a Difference wilt Thou put in the great Day, betwixt simple and pertinacious Barrenness! Surely, if my Root be not Rottenness, such heavenly Waterings and Influences as these, will make it sprout forth into Fruits of Obedience.



CHAP. X.

Upon a Dearth through Want of Rain.

*If GOD restrain the Showers, you mourn and cry;  
Shall Saints not mourn when spiritual Clouds are dry?*

OBSERVATION.

**I**T is deservedly accounted a sad Judgment, when GOD shuts up the Heavens over our Heads, and makes the Earth as Brass under our Feet. Then the Husbandmen are called to Mourning; all the Fields languish, and the bellowing Cattle are pined with Thirst. Such a sad State the Prophet rhetorically describes, *Jer. xiv. 3, 4, 5, 6. The Nobles have sent their little ones to the Waters; they came to the Pits, and found no Water; they returned with their Vessels empty, they were ashamed and confounded, and covered their Heads; because the Ground is chapt, for there was no Rain in the Earth, the Plowmen were ashamed, they covered their Heads. And that which makes the Want of Rain so terrible a Judgment, is the Fa-*  
mine



mine of Bread, which necessarily follows these extraordinary Droughts, and is one of the forest temporal Judgments which God inflicts upon the World.

**A P P L I C A T I O N.**

AND surely, as much Cause have they to weep and tremble, over whose Souls God shuts up the spiritual Clouds of the Gospel, thereby sending a spiritual Famine upon their Souls. Such a Judgment the LORD threatens in *Amos viii. 11.* *Behold, the Days come, saith the LORD, that I will send a Famine in the Land; not a Famine of Bread, nor a Thirst for Water, but of hearing the Word of the LORD.* The Meaning is, I will send a more fearful Judgment, than that of the Famine of Bread. Parallel to which is that Text, *Isaiah v. 6.* *I will lay it Waste (saith God of the fruitless Church) it shall not be pruned nor digged, but there shall come up Briars and Thorns; I will also command the Clouds, that they rain not upon it.*

AND we find both in human and sacred Histories, that when God hath shut up the spiritual Clouds, removing or silencing his Ministers, sensible Christians have ever been deeply affected with it, and reckoned it a most tremendous Judgment. Thus the Christians of *Antioch*, when *Chrysostom*, their Minister, was banished, judged it better to lose the Sun out of the Firmament, than lose their Minister. When the Ark of God (which was the Symbol of the Divine Presence among the Jews) was taken, *all the City cried out, 1 Sam. iv. 13.* The Loss of a Gospel Ministry is an inestimable Loss; not to be repaired but by its own Return, or by Heaven.

Want of Rain is terrible a Judgment is this  
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To let you see there is sufficient Ground for Sorrow, when GOD restrains the Influences of the Gospel, solemnly consider the following Particulars:

1. THAT it is a dreadful Token of GOD's great Anger against that People from whom he removes the Gospel. The Anger of GOD was fearfully incensed against the Church of *Ephesus*, when He did but threaten to come against her, and remove her Candlestick out of its Place, *Rev. ii. 5.* It is a Stroke at the Soul, a Blow at the Root; usually the last, and therefore the worst of Judgments.

2. THE Judgment will appear very heavy, if you consider the Loss which GOD's own People sustain by the Removal of the Gospel; for therein they lose,

(1.) THEIR chief Glory, *Rom. iii. 2.* The principal Thing in which the peculiar Glory of *Israel* consisted, was this, *that unto them were committed the Oracles of GOD.* On that Account it was called the *Glorious Land*, *Dan. xi. 16.* This made them greater than all the Nations round about them, *Deut. iv. 7, 8.*

(2.) By losing the Ordinances, they lose their Quicknings, Comforts, and Refreshments; for all these are sweet Streams from the Gospel Fountain, *Psal. cxix. 50.* No Wonder then to hear the People of GOD complain of dead Hearts, when the Gospel is removed.

(3.) IN the Loss of the Gospel they lose their Defence and Safety. This is their Hedge, their Wall of Protection, *Isa. v. 5.* Walls and Hedges (saith *Musculus in loc.*) are the Ordinances of GOD, which serve both to distinguish and to defend them.

When

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When GOD plucks up this Hedge, and breaks down this Wall, all Mischiefs break in upon us presently, 2 Chron. xv. 3, 4, 5, 6. Now for a long Season Israel hath been without the true GOD, and without a teaching Priest, and without Law—And in those Times there was no Peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great Vexations were upon all the Inhabitants of the Countries, and Nation was destroyed of Nation, and City of City; for GOD did vex them with all Adversity. How long did Jerusalem remain, after that Voice was heard in the Temple, *Migremus hinc?* Let us be gone?

(4.) WITH the Gospel, we lose our temporal Enjoyments and Comforts. These usually come and go with the Gospel. When GOD had once written *Loammi* upon Israel, the next News is this, *I will recover my Wool and my Flax*, Hof. ii. 9.

(5.) AND lastly, To come up to the very Case in Hand, they lose with it their spiritual Food and Subsistence; for the Gospel is their *Feast of fat Things*, Isaiah xxv. 6. their spiritual *Wells*, Isaiah xii. 3. a Dole distributed among the LORD's Poor, Rom. i. 11. In a Word, it is as the Rain and Dews of Heaven, which being restrained, a spiritual Famine necessarily follows; a Famine of all the most terrible.

Now, to shew you the Analogy betwixt this and a temporal Famine, take it in the following Particulars:

1. A FAMINE is caused by the Failing of Bread, or that which is in the Stead, and hath the Use of Bread. Dainties and Rarities may fail, and yet Men may subsist comfortably. As long as People have



have Bread and Water, they will not famish; but take away Bread once, and the Spirit of Man faileth. Upon this Account Bread is called a Staff, *Psalms* cv. 16. because what a Staff is to an aged or feeble Man, that Bread is to the faint and feeble Spirits. And look what Bread is to the natural Spirits, that, and more than that, the Word is to gracious Spirits, *Job* xxiii. 12. *I have esteemed the Words of thy Mouth, more than my necessary Food.* If once GOD break this Staff, the inner Man, that hidden Man of the Heart, will quickly begin to fail and falter.

2. IT is not every Scarcity of Bread that makes a Famine, but a general Failing of it; when no Bread is to be had, or that which is, yields no Nutriment. For a Famine may as well be occasioned by GOD's taking away the nourishing Virtue of Bread, as by taking away Bread itself, *Isa.* iii. 1. And so it is in a spiritual Famine, which is occasioned either by GOD's removing all the Ordinances, and making Vision utterly fail; or else, though there be Preaching, Prayer, and other Ordinances left, yet the Presence of GOD is not with them. There is no Marrow in the Bone, no Milk in the Breast; and so it is all one, as if there were no such Things.

3. In a corporeal Famine, mean and coarse Things become sweet and pleasant. That which before you would have thrown to your Dogs, now goes down pleasantly with yourselves. *To the hungry Soul every bitter Thing is sweet, Prov.* xxvii. 7. It is the Dutch Proverb, and a very true one, *Hunger is the best Cook.*

IT is storied of *Artaxerxes*, that when he was lying before his Enemies, he fed hungrily upon Barley-

Barley-bread, and said, O what Pleasure have I hitherto been ignorant of? When great *Darius* drank the puddled Water, that had been defiled with dead Carcases, he professed he never drank more pleasant Drink. And famous *Hunniades* said, he never sared more daintily, than when (in a like Exigence) he supped upon Bread, Onions, and Water, with a poor Shepherd in his Cottage.

JUST so doth the Famine of the Word raise the Esteem of vulgar and despised Truths. O what would we give for one of those Sermons, one of those Sabbaths we formerly enjoyed? *In those Days the Word of the LORD was precious.* When GOD calls to the Enemy to take away his contemned, but precious Dainties, from his wanton Children, and a spiritual Famine hath a little pinched them, they will then learn to prize their spiritual Food at a higher Rate.

4. *Lastly, IN Time of Famine there is Nothing so costly or precious, but People will part with it to purchase Bread. They have given their pleasant Things for Meat to relieve their Souls,* Lam. i. 11. And doubtless when a spiritual Famine shall pinch hard, those that have been close-handed to maintain a Gospel-ministry, will account it a choice Mercy to enjoy them again at any Rate. *Though the LORD feed you with the Bread of Adversity, and give you the Waters of Affliction, yet it will sweeten that Bread and Water to you, if your Teachers be no more removed into Corners,* Isaiah xxx. 20.

## REFLECTIONS.

1. Is the Famine of the Word such a fearful Judgment, may the ungrateful Soul say? Then LORD pardon my Unthankfulness, for the plentiful

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and long-continued Enjoyment of such an invaluable Mercy. How lightly have I esteemed the great Things of the Gospel? O that with Eyes and Hands lifted up to Heaven, I might bless the LORD that ever I was brought forth in an Age of so much Light! In a Valley of Visions! In a Land flowing with Gospel-mercies! *Hath not GOD made of one Blood all the Nations of Men, to dwell on the Face of the Earth? And determined the Times before appointed, and the Bounds of their Habitation?* Acts xvii. 26. Many of these great and populous Nations are involved in gross Darkness. Now that of all the several Ages of the World, and Places in it, GOD should espy the best Place for me, and bring me forth into it, in such a happy Time as can hardly be paralleled in History, for the Plenty of Gospel-mercies; that my Mother did not bring me forth in the Desarts of *Arabia*, or the Wastes of *America*, but in *England*, where GOD hath made the Sun of the Gospel to stand still, as the natural Sun did over *Gibeon*; and that such a Mercy should no more affect my Soul; let Shame cover my Face for this, and Trembling seize my Heart!

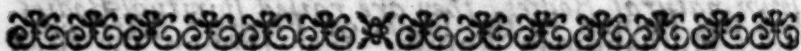
2. BUT is the Gospel indeed departed, may the deprived Christian say? Its sweet Influences restrained? And a Famine worse than that of Bread come upon us? *Alas! for the Day; for it is a great Day, so that none is like it; it is even the Day of Jacob's Trouble.* Woe is me, that ever I should survive the Gospel, and the precious Liberties and Mercies of it! What horrid Sins have been harboured amongst us, for which the LORD contends by such an unparalleled Judgment? LORD, let me justify Thee even in this severe Dispensation: The Provocations of thy Sons and of thy Daughters have been very great, and amongst them none greater than mine. May we not this Day read  
our



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our Sin in our Punishment? O what nice and wanton Appetites, what curious and itching Ears had thy People in the Days of Plenty? Methods, Tones, and Gestures, were more regarded than the excellent Treasures of Divine Truths. Ah, my Soul! I remember my Fault this Day. Little did I then consider, that Sermons work not upon Hearts, as they are elegant, but as they are Instruments in the Hand of GOD appointed to such an End. Even as *Augustine* said of the Conduits of Water, though one be in the Shape of an Angel, another of a Beast, yet the Water refreshes as it is Water, and not as it comes from such a Conduit. By this also, O LORD, Thou rebukest the Supineness and Formality of thy People. How drowsy, dull and careless have they been under the most excellent and quickning Means? Few more than I. Alas! I have often presented my Body before the LORD in Ordinances; but my Soul hath been wandering abroad. I should have come from under every Sermon, as a Sheet comes from the Press, with all the lively Impressions of the Truths I heard upon my Heart: But alas, if it had been demanded of me, as once it was of *Aristotle*, after a long and curious Oration, how he liked it, I might have answered as he did, truly I did not hear it; for I was all the While minding another Matter. Righteous art Thou, O LORD, in all that is come upon us.





## C H A P. XI.

Upon the Corruption of the Seed before  
it spring.

*Seeds die and rot, and then most fresh appear;  
Saints Bodies rise more orient than they were.*

## O B S E R V A T I O N.

**A**FTER the Seed is committed to the Earth, it seems to perish and die, as our Saviour speaks, *John xii. 24. Except a Corn of Wheat fall into the Ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it brings forth much Fruit.* The Death of the Corn in the Earth is not a total Death, but only the Alteration of it: For if once the seminal Life and Virtue of it were quite extinguished, it could never put forth Blade or Ear without a Miracle: Yet, because that Alteration is a Kind of Death, therefore *Christ* uses it as a fit Illustration of the Resurrection. And indeed there is Nothing in Nature more apt to illustrate that great Mystery. What a fragrant, green and beautiful Blade do we see spring up from a corrupted Seed? How black and mouldy is that? How beautiful and verdant is this?

## A P P L I C A T I O N.

**E**VEN thus shall the Bodies of the Saints arise in Beauty and Glory at the Resurrection. *They are sown*

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*sown in Dishonour, they are raised in Glory; they are sown natural Bodies, they are raised spiritual Bodies.* The Husbandman knows, that though the Seed rot in the Earth, yet it will rise again. And the Believer knows, *that though after his Skin Worms destroy his Body, yet in his Flesh he shall see GOD.* And the Resemblance betwixt the Seed sown, and springing up; and the Bodies of the Saints dying, and rising again, lies in these Particulars:

*First, THE Seed is committed to the Earth from whence it came, so is the Body of a Saint; Earth it was, and to Earth it is again resolved. Grace exempts not the Body of the best Man from seeing Corruption. Though Christ be in him, yet the Body is dead, that is, sentenced to Death, because of Sin. It is appointed for all Men once to die.*

*Secondly, WHEN the Time is come for shooting up, the Earth that covered it can hide it no longer, it cannot keep it down a Day more; it will find or make a Way through the Clods: So in that Day when the great Trump shall sound, Bone shall come to his Bone, and the Graves shall not be able to hold them a Minute longer. Both Sea and Earth must render the Dead that are in them.*

*Thirdly, WHEN the Seed appears above Ground again, it appears much more fresh than when it was cast into the Earth. GOD cloaths it with such Beauty, that it is not like what it was before.*

THUS rise the Bodies of the Saints, marvellously improved, beautified, and perfected with spiritual Qualities and rich Endowments; in Respect whereof they are called *spiritual Bodies*, 1 Cor. xv. 43. for as Spirits subsist without Food, Raiment, Sleep, know no Weariness or Pain; so our Bodies after



the Resurrection shall be above those Necessities and Distempers; for we shall be as the Angels of God. Yea, *our vile Bodies shall be changed, and made like unto Christ's glorious Body*; which is the highest Pitch and Ascent of Glory and Honour, that a human Body is capable of. Indeed the Glory of the Soul shall be the greatest Glory: That is the invaluable Gem; but God will bestow a distinct Glory upon the Body, and richly enamel the very Case in which that precious Jewel shall be kept. In that glorious Morning of the Resurrection, the Saints shall put on their new fresh Suits of Flesh, richly laid and trimmed with Glory. Those Bodies which in the Grave were but Dust and Rotteness, when it delivers them back again, shall be shining and excellent, everlastingly freed,

1. FROM all natural Infirmities and Distempers; Death is their good Physician, which at once frees them of all Diseases. It is a great Affliction now to many of the LORD's People, to be clogg'd with so many bodily Infirmities. *The Spirit indeed is willing, but the Flesh is weak.* A crazy Body retorts and shoots back its Distempers upon the Soul, with which it is so closely conjoined; but though now the Soul (as *Theophrastus* speaks) pays a dear Rent for the Tabernacle in which it dwells, yet when Death dissolves that Tabernacle, all the Diseases and Pains under which it groaned, shall be buried in the Rubbish of its Mortality; and when they come to be re-united, God will bestow rich Gifts and Dowries, even upon the Body, in the Day of its Re-esponsals.

2. IT shall be freed from all Deformities; there are no Breaches, Flaws, Monstrosities in glorified Bodies; but of them it may much rather be said, *what*

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what was once said of *Absalom*, 2 Sam. xiv. 25. *That from the Crown of his Head, to the Sole of his Foot, there was no Blemish in him.*

3. IT shall be freed from all natural Necessities, to which it is now subjected in this its Animal State. How is the Soul now disquieted with Cares and Troubles, to provide for a perishing Body? *But Meats for the Belly, and the Belly for Meats; GOD shall destroy both it and them,* 1 Cor. vi. 13. (i. e.) as to their present Office.

4. THEY shall be freed from Death, to which henceforth they can be subject no more; that formidable Adversary of Nature shall assault it no more. *For they shall be accounted worthy to obtain that World, and the Resurrection from the Dead; neither marry, nor are given in Marriage, neither can they die any more; for they shall be equal to the Angels, and are the Children of GOD, being the Children of the Resurrection,* Luke xx. 35, 36. Mark it (equal to the Angels) not that they shall be single Spirits without Bodies, but equal to them in the Way and Manner of their Living and Acting. We shall then live upon GOD, and act freely, purely, and delightfully for GOD; for all Kind of Living upon the Creatures, seems in that Text to be excluded. Nothing but GOD shall enamour and fill the Soul, and the Body shall be perfectly subdued to the Spirit. LORD, what hast Thou prepared for them that love Thee!

*R E F L E C T I O N S.*

1. IF I shall receive my Body again so dignified and improved in the World to come, then LORD let me never be unwilling to use it now for thy Glory, or my own Salvation. Now, O my GOD,  
it

it grieves me to think how many precious Opportunities of serving and honouring Thee, I have lost under Pretence of endangering my Health.

I HAVE been more sollicitous to live long and healthfully, than to live usefully and fruitfully; and like enough my Life had been more serviceable to Thee, if it had not been so fondly over-valued.

FOOLISH Soul, hath GOD given thee a Body for a living Instrument? And art thou afraid to use it? Wherein is the Mercy of having a Body, if not in spending it in the Service of GOD? To have an active vigorous Body, and not to employ it for GOD, for Fear of endangering its Health, is as if one should give thee a handsome and sprightly Horse, upon Condition thou shouldst not ride or work him. If some had enjoyed the Blessing of such an healthy active Body as mine, what excellent Services would they have performed to GOD in it?

AGAIN, 2. If my Body shall as surely rise again in Glory, as the Seed I sow doth, why should not this comfort me over all the Pains, Weaknesses and Dulness with which my Soul is clogg'd? Thou knowest, my GOD, what a Grief it hath been to my Soul, to be fettered and entangled with the Distempers of this vile Body. It hath made me sigh and say, with holy *Anselme*, when he saw the mounting Bird weighed down by the Stone hanging at her Leg. LORD, thus it fares with the Soul of thy Servant! Fain would I serve, glorify, and enjoy Thee; but a distempered Body will not let me. However, it is reviving to think, that though I am now forced to crawl like a Worm in the Discharge of my Duties, I shall shortly fly like a Seraph in the Execution of thy Will. Chear up,  
drooping



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drooping Soul, the Time is at Hand, when thou shalt be made more willing than thou art, and thy Flesh not weak as it is now.

3. AND is it so indeed? Then let the dying Saint, like *Jacob*, rouse up himself upon his Bed, and encourage himself against the Fears of Death by this refreshing Consideration. Let him say, with holy dying *Musculus*, Why tremblest thou, O my Soul, to go forth of this Tabernacle, to the Land of Rest? Hath thy Body been such a pleasant Habitation to thee, that thou shouldst be loth to part with it; and with Assurance of receiving it again with such a glorious Improvement? I know, O my Soul! that thou hast a natural Inclination to this Body, resulting from the dear and strict Union which God Himself hath made betwixt thee and it; but beware thou love it not immoderately; it is but a Creature, yea, a fading Creature, and that which now stands in thy Way to the full Enjoyment of God. But say, why are the Thoughts of parting with it so burdensome to thee? Why so loth to take Death by its cold Hand? Is this Body thy old and dear Friend? True, but yet thou partest not with it upon such sad Terms, as should deserve a Tear at parting. For mayst thou not say of this Departure, as *St. Paul* at the Departure of *Onesimus*, *Philemon* 15. *It therefore departeth for a Season, that thou mayst receive it for ever.* The Day of Re-espousals will quickly come; and in the mean Time, as thy Body shall not be sensible of the tedious Length of interposing Time, so neither shalt thou be solicitous about thine absent Friend: For the Fruition of God in that thine unbodied State, shall fill thee with infinite Satisfaction.

Or,

OR is it not so much simply for parting with it, as for the Manner of thy parting, either by the slow and lingering Approaches of a natural, or the quick and terrible Approaches of a violent Death: Why, trouble not thyself about that; for if God lead thee through the long dark Lane of a tedious Sickness, yet at the End of it is thy Father's House. And for a violent Death 'tis not so material, whether Friends or Enemies stand weeping or triumphing over thy dead Body. When thy Soul shall be in Heaven, it will not be sensible how the Body is used on Earth.



## C H A P. XII.

Upon the Dangers incident to Corn from  
Seed-time in Harvest.

*Fowls, Weeds, and Blastings do your Corn annoy,  
Even so Corruptions would your Grace destroy.*

### O B S E R V A T I O N.

**T**HERE are (amongst many others) three dangerous Periods betwixt the Seed-time and Harvest. The first, when Corn is newly committed to the Earth, all that lies uncovered is quickly pick'd up by the Birds; and much of that which is but slightly covered, is stockt up as soon as it begins to sprout, by Rooks and other devouring Fowls; but if it escapes the Fowls and gets Root in the Earth, yet then it is hazarded by noxious Weeds, which suck away its Nourishment, whilst it is yet in the tender Blade. If by the Care of the vigilant Husbandman it be freed from choaking Weeds; yet lastly, as great a Danger as any of the former still attends it; for often, whilst it is blowing in the Ear, Blastings, and

and Mildews smite it in the Stalk, which cut off the Juice and Sap that should ascend to nourish the Ear; and so shrivels and dries up the Grain whilst it is yet immature, whereby it becomes like those Ears of Corn in *Pharaoh's* Vision, which were thin and blasted with the East-Wind; or like the Ears the *Psalmist* speaks of upon the House-top, *where-with the Reaper filleth not his Arms.*

### APPLICATION.

TRUE Grace, from the Infancy to the Perfection thereof, conflicts with far greater Dangers, amongst which it meets with three dangerous Periods which marvellously hazard it: So that it is a much greater Wonder that it ever arrives at Perfection. For,

*First*, No sooner hath the great Husbandman disseminated these holy Seeds in the regenerate Heart, but Multitudes of impetuous Corruptions immediately assault, and would certainly devour them like the Fowls of the Air, did not the same Arm that sowed them, also protect them. It fares with Grace, as with *Christ* its Author, whom *Herod* sought to destroy in his very Infancy.

As Things are in their Natures and Principles, so they are in their Operations and Effects; Fire and Water are of contrary Qualities, and when they meet, they effectively oppose each other. Sin and Grace are so opposite, that if Sin should cease to oppose Grace, it would cease to Sin; and if Grace should not oppose Sin, it would cease to be Grace. And this doth much more endanger the Work, than any other Enemy it hath; because it works against it more inwardly, constantly, and advantageously, than any Thing else can do.

(I.) MORE inwardly, for it hath its Being in the same Soul where Grace dwells; yea, in the self-



self-same Faculties, so that it not only sets one Faculty against another, but the same Faculty against itself, the Understanding against the Understanding, and the Will against the Will; if it cannot totally hinder the Performance of a Duty, yet it flames the Soul upon the working Hand, whereby the Performance is not so spiritual, free and composed, as it desires. (2.) It opposes it more constantly, it is like a continual Dropping; a Man can no more fly from this Enemy, than from himself. There is a Time when the Devil leaves tempting; but no Time when Corruption ceases from working. And lastly, it opposes Grace more advantageously than any other Enemy can do, for it is not only always in the same Soul with it, but it is there naturally; it hath the Advantage of the Soil, which suits with it. And yet, Oh the Wonder of Free Grace! It is not swallowed up in Victory, it escapes this Hazard. But,

*Secondly*, It soon meets with another, though it escape this; even by Temptations which strike at the very Life of it; for these, like the Weeds, with seemingly loving Embraces, clasp about it; and did not the faithful God now make a Way to escape, instead of an Harvest, we should have an Heap? For, alas, what are we! to wrestle with Principalities and Powers, and spiritual Wickednesses in high Places?

*Lastly*, SAD Relapses like Blasts and Rustings often fade, and greatly endanger it, when it is even ready for the Harvest.

### REFLECTIONS.

AND are the Corruptions of my Heart to Grace, may the careless Soul say, what Fowls, Weeds, and Mil-

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Mildews are to the Corn? O what Need have I then to watch my Heart, and keep it with all Diligence; for in the Life of that Grace is wrapt up the Life of my Soul. He that carries a Candle in his Hand in a stormy Night, had need to cover it close, lest it be blown out, and he left in Darknes. O let me never say, GOD hath promised it shall persevere, and therefore I need not be so sollicitous to preserve it; for as this Inference is quite opposite to the Nature of true Grace and Assurance, which never encourage Carelessness, but provoke the Soul to an industrious Use of Means to preserve it: So, it is in itself an irrational and senseless Conclusion, which will never follow from any Scripture Promise.

LET all doubting Christians reflect seriously upon this Truth, and suck Marrow and Fatness out of it to strengthen them against all their Fears; your Life, your spiritual Life, hath for many Years hanged in Suspence before you; and you have often said with *David*, *I shall one Day fall by the Hand of Saul*. Desponding, trembling Soul, lift up thine Eyes and look upon the Fields, the Corn lives still, and grows up; though Birds have watched to devour it, Snows have covered it, Beasts have cropt it, Weeds have almost choak'd it, yet it is preserv'd And hath not GOD more Care of that precious Seed of his own Spirit in thee, than any Husbandman hath of his Corn? Hast thou not many Times said, and thought of it, as thou dost now, and yet it lives? O what Matter of unspeakable Joy and Comfort is this to upright Souls! Well then, be not discouraged, for thou dost not run as uncertainly, nor fight as one that beats the Air. Though thy Grace be weak, thy GOD is strong; though the Stream seem sometimes to fail, yet it is fed by an ever flowing Fountain.



# C H A P. XIII.

**Upon the Patience of the Husbandman for the Harvest.**

*Our Husbandmen for Harvest wait and stay,  
O let not any Saint do less than they.*

## O B S E R V A T I O N.

**T**HE Expectation of a good Harvest at last, makes the Husbandman with Patience digest all his Labours. He that plows, plows in Hope, and they are not so irrational to think, they shall presently be Partakers of their Hope, nor so foolish to anticipate the Harvest, by cutting down the Corn before it be fully ripen'd, but are content to plow, sow and weed it; and when it is fully ripe, then they go forth into the Fields, and reap it down with Joy.

## A P P L I C A T I O N.

**C**AN a little Corn cause Men to digest so many Labours, and make them wait with Patience 'till the Reaping come? Much more should the Expectation of eternal Glory fortify my Spirit against all Difficulties. It least of all becomes a Christian to be of an hasty and impatient Spirit. *Light is sown for*



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for the Righteous, and Joy for the Upright, Psal. xcii.

II. *Behold the Husbandman waiteth. Be patient therefore my Brethren, for the Coming of the LORD draws near.* There are three great Arguments to perswade Christians to a long-suffering and patient Frame under Sufferings.

1. THE Example of *Christ*, to think how quietly He suffered all Injuries and Difficulties with invincible Patience, is sufficient to shame the best of Christians, who are of such short Spirits. To this Purpose it was well noted by *Bernard*, Was the LORD of Glory thus emptied of his Fulness? And shall such a Worm as I swell?

2. THE Desert of Sin, *Lam. iii. 39. Why doth the living Man complain?* It was a good Saying of blessed *Greenham*; When Sin lies heavy, Affliction lies light. And it is was a famous Instance which *Dr. Taylor* gives of the Duke of *Conde*; when the Duke of *Conde* had voluntarily entered into the Incommodities of a religious Poverty, he was one Day spied and pitied by a Lord of *Italy*, who out of Tenderness wish'd him to be more careful of his Person; the good Duke answered, Sir, be not troubled, and think not that I am ill provided of Conveniencies, for I send an Harbinger before me that makes ready my Lodgings, and takes Care that I be royally entertained. The Lord asked him, who was his Harbinger? He answered, the Knowledge of myself, and the Consideration of what I deserve for my Sins; and when with this Knowledge I arrive at my Lodgings, how unprovided soever I find it, methinks it is ever better than I deserve; and as the Sense of Sin, which merits Hell, sweetens present Difficulties; so, (to come Home to the present Similitude) do the Hopes of a blessed Harvest and Reward in Heaven. This made *Abra-*

*ham* willing to wander up and down as a Stranger in the World; for he looked for a City that hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. The Hopes of such a Harvest is Encouragement to work hard, and wait long; yet some Christians are so impatient of it, that they would fain be reaping before the Time; but as God hath by an unalterable Law of Nature, appointed both the Seasons of Seed-time and Harvest; and when we have done all we can on our Part, we must wait 'till God send the former and the latter Rain, and give every natural Cause its Effect. So in Reference to our spiritual Harvest; we are appointed to use all God's Appointments, and when we have done all, must patiently wait 'till the Time of the Promise be fully come; *In due Time we shall reap, if we faint not.* To which patient Expectation, and quiet Waiting for Glory, the following Considerations are of excellent Use.

1. As the Husbandman knows when, the Seed-Time is past, it will not be long to the Harvest; and the longer he waits, the nearer still it is: So the Christian knows, *It is but yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. And that now his Salvation is nearer than when he first believed,* Rom. xiii. 11. What a small Point of Time is our waiting Time, compared with Eternity! Yet a few Days more, and then comes the long-expected and welcome Harvest.

2. THE Husbandman can find other Work to do, before the reaping Time come; he need not stand idle, though he cannot yet reap: And cannot a Christian find any Work to do for God, 'till he come to Heaven? O, there is much Work to do, and such Work as is only proper to this Season. You may now reprove Sin, exhort to Duty, suc-  
cour

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cour the Distressed; this is good Work, and this is your only Time for such Work; the whole of Eternity will be taken up in other Employments. *I think it meet (saith Peter) as long as I am in this Tabernacle, to stir up your Minds, knowing shortly, that I must put off this Tabernacle, 2 Pet. i. 13. 14. q. d. I know I have but a little Time to work among you, I am almost at Heaven; and therefore am willing to husband this present Moment as well as I can for you, O Christians! you need not stand idle; look round about you upon the Multitude of forlorn Sinners; speak now to them for God; speak now to God for them; for shortly you shall so speak no more, you shall see them no more 'till you see them a Christ's Bar; God leaves you here for their Sakes, up and be doing: If you had done all you were to do for yourselves and them, He would have you to Heaven immediately, you should not wait a Moment longer for Glory.*

3. HUSBANDMEN know, though they cannot yet gather in the precious Fruits of the Earth, yet all this while they are ripening for the Harvest; they would not house it green, or take it before its Time. And is not this also my Preparation-time for Glory? As God prepared Heaven for his People, by an Act of Creation, by the Death of *Christ*, which made a Purchase of it, and by his Ascension into it. So the Reason why we are kept here, is in order to our fitting for it. Heaven is ready, but we are not fully ready; the Barn is fit to receive the Corn, but the Corn is not fit to be gathered into it. *But for this self-same Thing God is now working in us, 2 Cor. v. 5. He is every Day at Work, by Ordinances, and by Providences, to perfect his Work in us; and as soon as that is finished, we shall hear a Voice like that, Rev. xi. 12. Come up hither, and immediately we shall be in the Spirit; for*



how ardently soever we long for that Day, *Christ* longs for it more than we can do.

4. THE Husbandman is glad of the First-fruits of that Glory? Have you no Earnests, Pledges, and First-fruits of it? It is your own Fault, if every Day you seed not upon such blessed Comforts of the Spirit, *Rom. viii. 23. Rom. v. 2. 1 Pet. viii. 9.* O how might the interposing Time, even all the Days of your Patience here, be sweetened with such Prelibations of the Glory to come!

5. HUSBANDMEN know it is best to reap, when it is fit to reap; one Handful fully ripe is worth many Sheaves of green Corn. And you know, Heaven will be sweetest to you, when you are fittest for it; the Child would pluck the Apple while it is green, but he might gather it easier, and taste it sweeter, by tarrying longer for it. When we have got a Taste of Heaven, we are all in Haste to be gone. Then, *O that I had Wings as a Dove! I would fly away and be at Rest.* Then we cry to GOD for ourselves, as *Moses* did for his Sister *Miriam*, *Heal her [now] O GOD, I beseech Thee*, *Numb. xii. 13.* Glorify me now, O LORD, I pray Thee! But surely, as GOD hath contrived thy Glory in the best of Ways, so He hath appointed for thee the fittest of Seasons; and whenever thou art gathered unto it thou shalt come as a Shock of Corn in its Season.

### REFLECTIONS.

I HAVE waited for thy Salvation, O GOD! Having received thy First-fruits, my Soul longs to fill its Bosom with the Sheaves of Glory. *As the Heart panteth for the Water-brooks, so panteth my Soul, for Thee, O GOD! O, when shall I come and appear before GOD? I desire to be dissolved, and to be*  
with

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with *Christ*. When shall I see that lovely Face? When shall I hear his transporting Voice? Some need Patience to die, I need it to live! Thy Sights, O GOD, by Faith, have made this World a Burden, this Body a Burden, and this Soul to cry like thirsty *David*, *O that one would give me of the Waters of Bethlehem to drink!* The Husbandman longs for his Harvest, because it is the Reward of his Toil and Labour; but what is his Harvest to mine? What is a little Corn to the Enjoyment of GOD? What is the Joy of Harvest to the Joy of Heaven? What are the Shoutings of Men in the Fields, to the Acclamations of glorified Spirits in the Kingdom of GOD? LORD, I have gone forth bearing more precious Seed than they; when shall I return rejoicing, bringing my Sheaves with me? Their Harvest comes when they receive their Corn, mine comes when I leave it. O much desired Harvest! O Day of the Gladness of my Heart! How long, LORD! How long! Here I wait as the poor Man at the Pool, looking when my Turn will come, but every one steps into Heaven before me; yet LORD, I am content to wait 'till my Time be fully come. I would be content to stay for my Glorification, 'till I have finish'd the Work of my Generation; and when I have done the Will of GOD, then to receive the Promise. If Thou hast any Work on Earth to use me in, I am content to abide: Behold, the Husbandmen waiteth, and so will I; for Thou art a GOD of Judgment, and blessed are all they that wait for Thee.

BUT how doth my slothful Soul sink down in the Flesh, (may some say) and settle in the Love of this animal Life? How doth it hug, and wrap up itself in the Garment of this Mortality, not desiring to be removed hence, to the more perfect and blessed State? The Husbandman indeed is content  
to

to stay 'till the appointed Weeks of the Harvest; but would he be content to wait always? O my sensual Heart! Is this Life of Hope as contentful to thee, as the Life of Vision will be? Why dost thou not groan within thyself, that this Mortality might be swallowed up of Life? Doth not the Scripture describe the Saints by their earnest *Looking for the Mercy of our LORD Jesus unto eternal Life!* Jude 21. *By their hastening unto the Coming of the Day of GOD,* 2 Pet. iii. 13. What is the Matter that my Heart hangs back? Doth Guilt lie upon my Conscience? Or have I gotten into a pleasant Condition in the World, which makes me say as *Peter on the Mount, It is good to be here?* Must GOD make all my earthly Comforts die, before I shall be willing to die? Awake Faith, awake my Love; beat up the drowsy Desires of my Soul, that I may say, make Haste my Beloved, and come away.







**C H. A. P. XIV**

**Upon the Harvest Season.**

*Corn fully ripe, is reap'd, and gather'd in:*

*So must your Souls, when ripe in Grace or Sin.*

**O B S E R V A T I O N.**

**W**HEN the Fields are white to Harvest, then the Husbandmen walk thro' them; and finding the Grain full and solid, they presently prepare their Sickles, send for their Harvest-men, who quickly reap them down, and after these follow the Binders, who tie it up; from the Field where it grew it is carried to the Barn, where it is thrashed out; the good Grain gathered into an Heap, the Chaff separated and burnt, or thrown to the Dunghill. How bare and naked do the Fields look after Harvest, which before were pleasant to behold? When the Harvest-men enter into the Field, it is (to allude to that of *Josel ii. 3.*) *before them like the Garden of Eden, and behind them a desolate Wilderness*; and in some Places it is usual to set Fire to the dry Stubble, when the Corn is housed, which rages furiously, and covers all with Ashes.

**A P P L I C A T I O N.**

THE Application of this I find made to my Hands by *Christ Himself*, in *Matt. xiii. 38, 39.*  
*The*

## 118 Husbandry Spiritualiz'd: Or,

*The Field is the World; the good Seed are the Children of the Kingdom; the Tares are the Children of the Wicked one; the Enemy that sowed them is the Devil; the Harvest is the End of the World; the Reapers are the Angels.*

THE Field is the World; there both the Godly and Ungodly live and grow together, 'till they be both ripe, and then they shall both be reaped down by Death; Death is the Sickle that reaps down both. I will open this Allegory in the following Particulars:

1. IN a catching Harvest, when the Husbandman sees the Clouds begin to gather and grow black, he hurries in his Corn with all possible Haste, and houses Day and Night.

So doth God the Great Husbandman; He hurries Believers into their Graves, when Judgments are coming upon the World; *Isa. lviii. 1. The Righteous perish, and no Man layeth it to Heart, and merciful Men are taken away; none considering that the Righteous is taken away from the Evil to come.* Methuselah died the Year before the Flood; Augustine a little before the Sacking of Hippo; Pareus just before the Taking of Heidelberge; Luther a little before the Wars brake out in Germany; but what spake I of single Saints? Sometimes the LORD houses great Numbers together, before some sweeping Judgment comes. How many bright and glorious Stars did set almost together, within the Compass of a few Years, to the Astonishment of many wise and tender Hearts in England. The LORD sees it better for them to be under Ground than above Ground, and therefore by a merciful Providence sets them out of Harm's Way.

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2. NEITHER the Corn, or Tares, can possibly resist the keen Sickle, when it is applied to them by the Reaper's Hand; neither can the Godly or Ungodly resist the Stroke of Death when God inflicts it, *Eccles. viii. 8. No Man can keep alive his own Soul in the Day of Death, and there is no Discharge in that War.* The frail Body of Man is as unable to withstand that Stroke, as the feeble Stalks of the Corn are to resist the sharp Sickle.

3. THE Reapers receive the Wheat which they cut down into their Arms and Bosom. Hence that Expression by Way of Imprecation upon the Wicked, *Pf. cxxix. 7. Let them be as the Grass upon the House-top, which withers before it grows up, where-with the Mower filleth not his Hand, nor he that bindeth the Sheaves his Bosom.* Such withered Grass are the Wicked, who are never taken into the Reapers Bosom; but as soon as Believers are cut down by Death, they fall into the Hands and Bosoms of the Angels of God, who bear them in their Arms and Bosoms to God their Father. For as these blessed Spirits did exceedingly rejoice at their Conversion, and thought it no Dishonour to minister to them whilst they stood in the Field, so when they are cut down by Death, they will rejoice to be their Convoy to Heaven.

4. WHEN the Corn and Weeds are reaped or mowed down, they shall never grow any more in that Field; neither shall we ever return to live an animal Life any more after Death. *Job vii. 9, 10. As the Cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to the Grave shall come up no more; he shall return no more to his House, neither shall his Place know him any more.*

LASTLY,



LASTLY, (to come Home to the particular Subject of this Chapter) the Reapers are never sent to cut down the Harvest 'till it be fully ripe; neither will GOD reap down Saints or Sinners, 'till they are come to a Maturity of Grace or Wickedness. Saints are not reaped down 'till their Grace be ripe, *Job v. 26. Thou shalt come to thy Grave in a full Age, as a Shock of Corn cometh in its Season.* " Not that every godly Man dies in such a full " old Age (saith Mr. Caryl on the Place) but yet " in one Sense it is an universal Truth; for when- " soever they die, they die in a good Age; yea, " tho' they die in the Spring and Flower of their " Youth, they die in a good old Age, *i. e.* they " are ripe for Death whenever they die: When- " ever the godly Man dies, it is harvest Time " with him, tho' in a natural Capacity he be cut " down while he is green, and cropt in the Bud " or Blofom, yet in his spiritual Capacity he ne- " ver dies before he be ripe. GOD ripens his " speedily, when He intends to take them out of " the World speedily; He can let out such warm " Rays and Beams of his Spirit upon them, as " shall soon mature the Seeds of Grace for " Glory."

THE Wicked also have their Ripening-Time for Hell; GOD doth with much Long-suffering endure the Vessels of Wrath prepared for Destruction. Of their Ripeness for Judgment the Scripture often speaks, *Gen. xv. 16. The Sin of the Amorites is not yet full.* And of Babylon it is said, *Jer. li. 13. O thou that dwellest upon many Waters, thine End is come, and the Measure of thy Covetousness.*

It is worth remarking, that the Measure of the Sin, and the End of the Sinner come together.

So

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So *Joel* iii. 13. Put ye in the Sickle, for the Harvest of the Earth is ripe, for the Press is full, the Fats overflow, for their Wickedness is great. Where note, Sinners are not cut down 'till they be ripe and ready. Indeed, they are never ripe for Death, nor ready for the Grave; that is, fit to die: Yet they are always ripe for Wrath, and ready for Hell before they die. Now as Husbandmen judge of the Ripeness of the Harvest, by the Colour and Hardness of the Grain; so may we judge of the Ripeness both of Saints and Sinners, for Heaven or Hell, by these following Signs:

### *Three Signs of the Maturity of Grace.*

I. WHEN the Corn is near ripe, it bows the Head, and stoops lower than when it was green. When the People of GOD are near ripe for Heaven, they grow more humble and self-denying than in the Days of their Profession. The longer a Saint grows in this World, the better he is still acquainted with his own Heart, and his Obligations to GOD; both which are very humbling Things. *Paul* had one Foot in Heaven, when he called himself the chief of Sinners, and least of Saints, *1 Tim.* i. 15. *Eph.* iii. 8. A Christian in the Progress of his Knowledge and Grace, is like a Vessel cast into the Sea, the more it fills, the deeper it sinks. Those that went to study at *Athens* (saith *Plutarch*) at first coming, seemed to themselves to be wise Men; afterwards, only Lovers of Wisdom; and after that, only Rhetoricians, such as could speak of Wisdom, but knew little of it; and last of all, Ideots in their own Apprehensions; still with the Increase of Learning, laying aside their Pride and Arrogancy.

2. WHEN Harvest is nigh, the Grain is more solid and pithy than ever it was before; green Corn is soft and spongy, but ripe Corn is substantial and weighty: So it is with Christians; the Affections of a young Christian perhaps are more sprightly, but those of a grown Christian are more judicious and solid; their *Love to Christ abounds more and more in all Judgment*, Phil. i. 9. The Limbs of a Child are more pliable, but as he grows up to a more perfect State, the Parts are more consolidated and firmly knit.

3. WHEN Corn is dead ripe, it is apt to fall of its own Accord to the Ground, whereby it doth as it were anticipate the Harvester, and calls upon him to put in the Sickle. Not unlike unto which are the Lookings and Longings, the Groanings and Hastenings of ready Christians to their expected Glory; they hasten to the Coming of the LORD, or as *Montanus* more fitly renders it, they hasten the Coming of the LORD; i. e. they are urgent and instant in their Desires and Cries to hasten his Coming; their Desires fall forth to meet the LORD, they willingly take Death by the Hand; as the Corn bends to the Earth, so do these Souls to Heaven. This shews their Harvest to be near.

#### *Six Signs of the Maturity of Sin.*

WHEN Sinners are even dead ripe for Hell, these Signs appear upon them, or by these at least, you may conclude those Souls not to be far from Wrath.

1. WHEN Conscience is wasted and grown past feeling, having no Remorse for Sin; when it ceases to reprove and smite for Sin any more, the Day of that Sinner is at Hand, his Harvest is even come.



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come. The greatest Violation of Conscience is the greatest of Sins; this was the Case of the forlorn *Gentiles*, among whom *Satan* had such a plentiful Harvest; the Patience of *GOD* suffered them to grow 'till their Consciences were grown seared and past feeling, *Eph. iv. 19.* When a Member is so mortified, that if you lance and cut it never so much, no fresh Blood or quick Flesh appears, nor doth the Man feel any Pain in all this, then it is high Time to cut it off.

2. WHEN Men give themselves over to the Satisfaction of their Lusts, to commit Sin with Greediness, then are they grown to a Maturity of Sin; when Men have slipt the Reins of Conscience, and rush headlong into all Impiety, then the last Sands of *GOD's* Patience are running down. Thus *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, and the Cities about them, in like Manner gave themselves over to Wickedness, and then Justice quickly made them an Example suffering the Vengeance of eternal Fire.

3. THAT Man is even ripe for Hell, that is become a Contriver of Sin, a Designer, a Student in Wickedness; one would think it strange, that any Man should set his Invention on work upon such a Subject as Sin is; that any should study to become a dextrous Artist this Way, and yet the Scripture frequently speaks of such *whose Bellies prepare Deceit, Job xv. 35. who travail in Pain to bring forth this deformed Birth, Ver. 20. who wink with their Eyes whilst plodding Wickedness*, as Men use to do when they are most intent upon any knotty Problem, *Prov. vi. 13.* These have so much of Hell already in them, that they are more than half in Hell already.

4. HE that of a forward Professor is turned a bitter Persecutor, is also within a few Rounds of the Top of the Ladder; the Contempt of their Light the LORD hath already punished upon them, in their Obduracy and Madness against the Light. Reader, if thou be gone thus far, thou art almost gone beyond all Hope of Recovery. Towards other Sinners God usually exercises more Patience, but with such He makes short Work. When Judas turns Traytor to his LORD, he is quickly sent to his own Place. Such as are again intangled and overcome of those Lusts they once had clean escaped, bring upon themselves swift Damnation, and their Judgment lingers not.

5. HE that can endure no Reproof or Controll in the Way of his Sin, but derides all Counsel, and like a strong Current sweeps away all Obstacles in his Way, will quickly fall into the dead Lake. *He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his Neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without Remedy.* This is a Death-spot, a Hell-spot, wherever it appears. From this very Symptom the Prophet plainly predicted the approaching Ruin of Amaziah, 2 Chron. xxv. 16. *I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened to my Voice.* He that will not be timely counselled, shall be quickly destroyed.

*Lastly,* WHEN a Man comes to glory in his Sin, and boast of his Wickedness, then it is Time to cut him down; *whose End is Destruction, whose Glory is in their Shame,* Phil. iii. 19. This is a braving, a daring of God to his Face.

You see now what are the Signs of a full ripe Sinner; and when it comes to this, either with a Nation,

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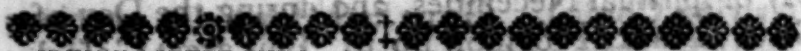
Nation, or with a single Person, then Ruin is near. It is in the filling up the Measure of Sin, as in the filling of a Vessel cast into the Sea, which rolls from Side to Side, taking in the Water by little and little, 'till it be full, and then sinks to the Bottom. Mean while, admirable is Divine Patience, which bears with these Vessels of Wrath whilst sitting for Destruction.

**R E F L E C T I O N S.**

I. C H E A R thyself, O my Soul! with the strengthening Bread of this Divine Meditation. Let Faith turn every Drop of this Truth into a Soul-reviving Cordial. God hath sown the precious Seed of Grace upon my Soul; and tho' my Heart hath been an unkind Soil which hath kept it back, and much hindered its Growth, yet, blessed be the LORD, it still grows on, tho' by slow Degrees; and from the Springing of the Seed, and Shootings forth of those gracious Habits, I may conclude an approaching Harvest. O that every Day I were more active for the GOD of my Salvation! Grow on my Soul, and add to thy Faith Virtue, to thy Virtue Knowledge: Grow on from Faith to Faith; keep thyself under the ripening Influences of heavenly Ordinances; the faster thou growest in Grace, the sooner thou shalt be reaped in Mercy, and *bound up in the Bundle of Life*, 1 Sam. xxv. 29. I have not yet attained the Measure of Grace assigned to me, neither am I already perfect, but am reaching forth to the Things before me, and pressing towards the Mark for the Prize of my heavenly Calling. O Mercy to be admired! that I who lately had one Foot in Hell, stand now with one Foot in Heaven!



2. BUT the Case is far different with me, may a decaying Christian say, whilst others are ripening apace for Heaven, I am withering; many a Soul plowed up by Conviction, and sown by Sanctification long after me, hath quite out-grown me; my sweet and early Blossoms are nipt and blown off, my bright Morning overcast; had I kept on according to my first Growth, I had now been in Heaven, or at least in the Suburbs of it on Earth; but my Graces wither and languish, my Heart cools to heavenly Things; the Sun and Rain of Ordinances and Providences improve not my Graces; how sad therefore is my Soul?



## C H A P. XV.

Upon the Care of Husbandmen to provide  
for Winter.

*Your Winter-Store in Summer you provide:  
To Christian Prudence this must be apply'd.*

## O B S E R V A T I O N.

**G**OOD Husbands are careful in Summer to provide for Winter; then they gather in their Winter-store, Food and Fuel for themselves, and Fodder for their Cattle. *He that gathers in Summer is a wise Son, but he that sleeps in Harvest is a Son of Shame, Prov. x. 5.* A well-chosen Season is the greatest Advantage of any to Action, which as it is seldom found in Haste, so it is often  
lost

lost by Delay. It is a good Proverb which the frugal *Dutch* have among them, "A good Saver will make a good Benefactor:" And it is a good Proverb of our own, "He that neglects the Occasion, the Occasion will neglect him." Husbandmen know that Summer will not last all the Year, neither will trust to a mild Winter, but in Season provide for the worst.

### APPLICATION.

WHAT excellent Christians should we be, were we but as provident for our Souls? It is doubtless a singular Point of Christian Wisdom to foresee a Day of spiritual Necessities, and during the Day of Grace to make Provision for it. This great Gospel Truth is excellently shadowed forth in this natural Observation, which I shall branch out into these Particulars:

I. HUSBANDMEN know there is a Change of Seasons and Weather; tho' it be pleasant Weather now, yet Winter will tread upon the Heels of Summer: Frosts, Snows, and great Falls of Rain must be expected. This alternate Course of Seasons in Nature is settled by a firm Law of the GOD of Nature, to the End of the World, *Gen. viii. 22. Whilst the Earth remaineth, Seed-time and Harvest, Cold and Heat, Winter and Summer, Day and Night shall not cease.*

AND Christians know, that there are Changes in the Right-hand of the Most High, in Reference to their spiritual Seasons. If there be a Spring-time of the Gospel, there may also be an Autumn; if a Day of Prosperity, it may set in a Night of Adversity; for GOD hath set the one over against the other, *Eccles. vii. 14.* In Heaven there is a Day  
of

of everlasting Serenity, in Hell a Night of perfect Horror and Darkness; on Earth Light and Darkness take their Turns; Prosperity and Adversity, even to Souls as well as Bodies, succeed each other. If there be a Gospel-day, a Day of Grace now current, it will have its Period and Determination.

2. THE End of GOD's ordaining a Summer Season, and sending warm and pleasant Weather, is to ripen the Fruits of the Earth, and give the Husbandman fit Opportunity to gather them in.

AND GOD's Design in giving Men a Day of Grace, is to furnish them with an Opportunity for everlasting Happiness, *Rev. ii. 21. I gave her a Space to repent.* It is not a meer Reprieve of the Soul, or only a Delay of the Execution of Wrath, tho' there be much Mercy in that; but the peculiar Aim of this Patience of GOD, is to open for them a Way to escape the Wrath to come.

3. A PROPER Season neglected and lost is irrecoverable. Many Things in Husbandry must be done in their Season, or cannot be done at all; if he plow not, and sow not in the proper Time, he loses the Harvest of that Year.

IT is even so as to spiritual Seasons. Grace despised, in the Season when GOD offers it, is irrecoverably lost, *Prov. i. 28. Then (i. e. when the Season is over) they shall call upon Me, but I will not hear.* O, there is a great deal of Time in a short Opportunity! that may be done, or prevented, in an Hour rightly timed, which cannot be done or prevented in a Man's Life-time. Our Glass runs in Heaven, and we cannot see how  
much



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much or little of the Sand of God's Patience is yet to run down; but this is certain, when that Glass is run, there is Nothing to be done for our Souls, *Luke xix. 42. O that thou hadst known, at least in this thy Day, the Things that belong to thy Peace.*

6. THOSE Husbandmen that are careful and laborious in the Summer, have the Comfort and Benefit of it in Winter; he that then provides Fuel, shall sit warm in his Habitation, when others blow their Fingers. He that provides Food for his Family, and Fodder for his Cattle in the Harvest, shall eat the Fruit of it, and enjoy the Comfort of his Labours, when others shall be exposed to Straits: And he that lays up for his Soul a good Foundation against the Time to come, shall eat when others are hungry. A Day of Death shall come, and that will be a Day of Straits to all negligent Souls; but then the diligent Christian shall enjoy the Peace and Comfort that shall flow in upon his Heart, from his holy Care and Diligence in Duties; as *2 Cor. i. 12. This is our Re-joicing, the Testimony of our Conscience, that in all Sincerity and godly Simplicity, we have had our Conversation in this World.*

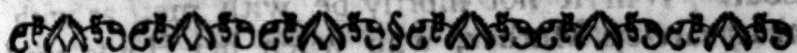
## REFLECTIONS.

1. I HAVE indeed been a good Husband for the World, may the careless Soul say; with what Care have I looked out for myself and Family, to provide Food to nourish them, and Cloaths to defend them from the Asperities of Winter? Mean while neglecting to make Provision for Eternity, or take Care for my Soul. O my destitute Soul! how much have I slighted and undervalued thee? I have taken more Care for an Horse or an Ox, than

than for thee; a well-stored Barn, but an empty Soul. Will it not shortly be with me, as with that careless Mother, who when her House was on Fire, busily bestirred herself to save the Goods, but forgot the Child? and then minding her Child, ran up and down like one distracted, and crying, "O my Child, my Child! I have saved my Goods, and lost my Child." Besides, how easy will my Conviction be at the Bar of *Christ*? Will not my Care for the Things of this Life leave me speechless and self-condemned in that Day? What shall I answer when the **LORD** shall say, Thou couldst foresee a Winter, and seasonably provide for it? Yea, thou hadst so much Care of the very Beasts, to provide for their Necessities, and why tookst thou no Care for thy Soul? Was that only not worth the caring for?

2. Is it so dangerous to neglect a present Season of Grace? What then have I done, may the presumptuous Soul say, who have suffered many such Seasons to die away in my Hand, upon a groundless Hope of future Opportunities? Ah, deluded Wretch! what if that Supposition fail? Where am I then? I am not the **LORD** of Time, neither am I sure that He who is, will ever vouchsafe an Hour of Grace in old Age, to him that hath neglected many such Hours in his Youth.





CHAP. XVI.

Upon Reaping the same we Sow.

*When from Tare Seeds you see choice Wheat to grow,  
Then from your Lusts may Joy and Comfort flow.*

OBSERVATION.

**G**OD gives to every Seed its own Body, 1 Cor. xv. 38. At first He created every Tree and Herb of the Field, having its Seed in its self, for the Conservation of the Species, and they all inviolably observe the Law of their Creation. All Fruits naturally rise out of the Seeds and Roots proper to them. *Men do not gather Grapes of Thorns, nor Figs of Thistles.* Such Productions would be monstrous in Nature; and although the Juice or Sap of the Earth be the common Matter of all Kind of Fruits, yet it is specified according to the different Sorts of Plants and Seeds it nourishes. Where Wheat is sown, it is turned into Wheat; in an Apple-tree, it becomes an Apple; and so in every Sort of Plants or Seeds, it is concocted into Fruit proper to the Kind.

APPLICATION.

TRANSLATE this into spiritual, and the Proposition shadowed forth by it, is fully expressed by the Apostle,



Apostle, Gal. vi. 7. *What a Man sows, that shall he reap; they that sow to the Flesh, shall of the Flesh reap Corruption; and they that sow to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap Life everlasting.* And as sure as the Harvest follows the Seed-time, so sure shall such Fruits result from the Seed of such Actions. He that soweth Iniquity, shall reap Vanity, Prov. xxii. 8. *And they that now go forth weeping, and bearing precious Seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing their Sheaves with them,* Psal. cxxvi. 5. The Sum of all is this, our present Actions have the same Relation to future Rewards and Punishments, as the Seed we sow in our Fields, hath to the Harvest we reap from it. Every gracious Action is the Seed of Joy, and every sinful Action the Seed of Sorrow. Two Things are sensibly presented to us in this Similitude.

I. THAT as the Seed sown is presently covered from our Sight under the Clods, and for some Time after we see no more of it, and yet at last it appears again, by which it is evident to us that it is not finally lost: So our present Actions, though transient, and perhaps forgotten, yet are not lost, but after a Time shall appear again, in Order to a Retribution.

If this were not so, all good and holy Actions would be to the Loss of him that performed them. All the Self-denial, spending Duties, and sharp Sufferings of the People of God, would turn to their Damage; and then also, what Difference would there be betwixt the Actions of a Man and a Beast, with Respect to future Good or Evil? Yea, Man would then be more feared and obeyed than God, and Souls be swayed in all their Motions, only by the Influence of present Things; and where then would Religion be found in the World? It is an

excellent Note of *Drexellius*; "Our Works (saith he) do not pass away as soon as they are done, but as Seed sown, shall after a Time rise up to all Eternity; whatever we think, speak or do, once spoken, thought or done, is eternal, and abides for ever."

WHAT *Zeuxes*, the famous Limner, said of his Work, may be truly said of all our Works; *Eternitati Pingo*, I paint for Eternity. O, how careful should Men be of what they speak and do, whilst they are commanded so to speak, and so to do, as those that shall be judged by the perfect Law of Liberty. What more transient than a vain Word? And yet, for such Words, Men shall give an Account in the Day of Judgment. That is the first Thing; Actions like Seed, shall rise and appear again in Order to a Retribution.

2. THE other Thing held forth in this Similitude is, That according to the Nature of our Actions now, will be the Fruit of them. Though the Fruit of holy Actions, for the present may seem bitter, and the Fruit of sinful Actions sweet and pleasant, yet there is Nothing more certain, than that their future Fruits shall be according to their present Nature. Then *Dionysius* shall retract that Saying, "Behold how God favours our Sacrileges." Sometimes also God causes Sinners to reap in this World, the same that they have sown; as hath been their Punishment. It was openly confessed by *Adonibezek*, Judg. i. 7. *as I have done, so hath God requited me.*

It is not always so in this World, but so it shall be in that to come; the Table shall then be turned, and the Scene altered; *for shall not the Judge of all the World do righteously?* *Diogenes* was tempted

to think, that GOD had cast off the Government of the World, when he saw the Wicked prosper in their Wickedness. On the same Ground many have been tempted to Atheism; but then the World shall see Justice shine out in its Glory. *Tribulation, Anguish and Wrath, to every Soul of Man that doth Evil; but Glory, Honour, and Peace, to every Man that worketh Good, Rom. ii. 9, 10.* Then it will appear what Seed we sowed, what Lives we lived; *For GOD shall bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret Thing, whether it be Good or Evil.*

### REFLECTIONS.

I. THIS Meditation may be to me (may the profane Person say) what the Hand-writing upon the Wall was to that profane Prince, *Dan. v. 5, 6.* For if all the Actions of this Life be Seed sown for the next, LORD, what a dreadful Harvest am I like to have? How many Oaths and Curses, Lies and vain Words, have I sown with my Tongue? How have I wronged, oppressed, and over-reached in my Dealings? Rushed into all Profaneness, Drunkenness, Uncleaness, *as the Horse rusheth into the Battle;* and what shall I reap from such Seed as this, but Vengeance? These Sins seemed pleasant in the Commission, but how bitter will they be in their Account? *What shall I do when GOD riseth up? and when He visiteth, what shall I answer Him?* *Job xxxi. 14.* Is it not reasonable and just, (O my Soul) that thou shouldst eat the Fruit of thine own Planting, and reap what thou hast sown? I thought Nothing but Profit and Pleasure would spring from my Lusts, but now I see it is a Root bearing Gall and Wormwood. Wretched Soul, what shall I do? Surely I am undone. I have been the Author of mine own Ruin. Let me rather taste the Bitterness of Sin, by Repentance now, than enjoy



enjoy its present Pleasures, which betray the Soul to endless Wrath!

2. Mean while, bless the LORD (O my Soul) who enabled thee to sow better Seed! Who kept thee watching, humbling thyself, and praying, whilst others have been swearing, drinking, and blaspheming. This will yield thee Fruit of Joy in the World to come; yea, it already yields Peace to thy Conscience. These Revenues are better than Gold, sweeter than the Honey, and the Honeycomb; not that such Fruits are meritoriously contained in these Actions, I sow to myself in Righteousness, but I reap in Mercy, *Hos. x. 12.* This is the Way in which God will save and glorify me. O then let me be ever abounding in the Work of the LORD, knowing that my Labour shall not be in vain in the LORD.



## CHAP. XVII.

### Upon the Joy of Harvest-men.

*Great is the Joy of Harvest-men, yet less  
Than theirs, whom God doth with his Favour bless.*

### OBSERVATION.

**A**MONG all earthly Joys, these four Sorts are noted in Scripture, as the most excellent and remarkable,

136 *Husbandry Spiritualiz'd: Or,*

1. **NUPTIAL** Joys, the Day of Espousals is the Day of the Gladness of Man's Heart, *Cant. iii. 11.*

2. *The Joy of Children.* Though now it seem but a common Mercy to most, and a Burden to some, yet the People of GOD were wont to esteem it a choice Mercy, and rejoiced greatly in it.

3. *The Joy of Conquest,* when Men divide the Spoil. And

*Lastly, THE Joy of Harvest.* These two we find put together, *Isa. ix. 3. They joy before Thee according to the Joy in Harvest, and as Men rejoice when they divide the Spoil.*

**APPLICATION.**

**THUS,** and unspeakably more than thus, do Saints rejoice and shout for Joy, when they reap the Favour and Love of GOD, for which they laboured in so many a weary Duty. This Joy of Harvest, as great as it is, and as much as carnal Hearts are lifted up with it, is but a Trifle, a Thing of nought, compared with theirs; after they have sown to themselves in Righteousness, and waited for the Returns of their Duties with Patience, and at last come to reap in Mercy, either the full Harvest in Heaven, or but the First-fruits of it on Earth, they rejoice, *with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory, 1 Pet. i. 8.* This puts more Gladness into their Hearts, than when Corn and Wine increases, *Psal. iv. 7.* There is a great Difference betwixt the unnatural Inflammations of a feverish Body which wastes the Spirits, and drinks up the radical Moisture, and that kindly well-tempered Heat of an healthy Body; and as much between the sweet, serene and heavenly Joys, which flow from the Bo-

form of *Christ* into the Hearts of Believers, and those Earthly Delights which carnal Hearts in a sensual Way suck out of Creature-Enjoyments. I will shew you the Transcendency of spiritual Joys, above the Joy in Harvest, in the Particulars following.

1. You that joy with the Joy of Harvest, are glad, because now you have Food for yourselves and Families to live upon all the Year; but the Christian rejoiceth, because he hath Bread to eat that the World knows not of. *Christ* is the Food of his Soul and his Flesh is Meat indeed, his Blood Drink indeed, *i. e.* the most real and excellent Food. You read, *Psal. lxxviii. 25.* that Man did eat Angels Food, *i. e.* Manna, which was such excellent Bread, that if Angels did live upon material Food, this would be chosen for them; and yet this is but a Type and dark Shadow of *Jesus Christ*, the Food of Believers.

2. You rejoice when you have gotten in your Harvest, because now you can pay those Debts which you have contracted. It is a Comfort to be out of Debt, and you may lawfully rejoice that God gives you wherewith to quit your Engagements, that you may owe no Man any Thing but Love: But still the Joy of Harvest falls short of the Joy of Saints; for you rejoice that you are, or have wherewith to help yourselves out of Mens Debts: But they rejoice that they are out of God's Debt; that his Book is cancelled, and their Sins pardoned; that by Reason of the imputed Righteousness of *Christ*, the Law can demand Nothing from them. O, what Matter of Joy is this!

3. YOUR Joy will have an End; the Time is coming, that when you have reaped down your



Harvests, yourselves must be reaped down by Death, and then you shall rejoice in these Things no more; but when your Joy is ended, then is the Joy of Saints perfected; they reap their Harvest, when you leave your Harvest; their Consolation is everlasting.

4. God can separate your Joy from these Enjoyments, even while you have them, as well as when you leave them. It is one Thing for a Man to have Riches and full Barns, and another Thing to have Comfort in them, *Eccles. v. 19, 20.* But the Joy of Christians is a Thing inseparable from their Enjoyment of *Christ*.

THE Joy of Harvest-men, for the most Part, is only in their Harvest, and in such earthly Things; take that away, and their Joy ceases. Earthly Hearts are acquainted with no higher Comforts; but the People of God can enjoy in Him, and take Comfort in their earthly Enjoyments too; and what Comfort they take in these Things, is much more refined and sweet than yours; for they enjoy all these Things in God, and his Love in giving them, puts a Sweetness into them, that you are unacquainted with. Thus you see, how far your Joy falls short of theirs.

### REFLECTIONS.

1. How have I rejoiced in a Thing of Nought, may many an One then say? God hath blessed me in my Fields, and in my Stores; but not with spiritual Blessings in heavenly Places in *Christ*. My Barns are full of Corn, but my Soul is empty of Grace; God hath given me a Fulness of the Things of this Life, but what if this be the whole of my Portion? For the most Part they are poor in this

World

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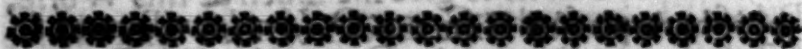
World, who are rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom? Is not this enough to damp all my Mirth? A Man in a Fever hath a lively Colour, but a dying Heart. I have an Appearance, a Shadow of Comfort, but a sad State of Soul.

BLESSED be the GOD and Father of my LORD Jesus Christ, may a Believer say, *who hath blessed me with all Spiritual Blessings in Christ.* Though He hath not seen fit to give me much of this World, yet it hath pleased Him to settle a rich Inheritance upon me, the Hopes whereof, yield my Soul more true Comfort than all the present Enjoyments of this World. Blessed be the LORD, who hath not given me my Portion in this Life, that by keeping me from the Enjoyment, hath also preserved me from the Snares of a prosperous Estate.

LORD JESUS, I have no Bags, I have no Barns; but Thou shalt be to me instead of all those Things. When others rejoice in the Fulness of their earthly Comforts, I will rejoice in the Fulness of *Christ*; they have that which I shall not want; and I have that which all their Riches cannot purchase. Bless the LORD, O my Soul!

BUT LORD, how am I obliged, above Thousands, to love and praise Thee; to bless and admire Thee, who hast not only plentifully provided for my Soul, but for my Body too! Who hast given me both the upper and the nether Springs, Heaven and Earth, Things present and Things to come: Thou hast not dealt so with all, no, not with all thy own People; many of them are Strangers to the Mercies which I enjoy. GOD hath done great Things for me, O my Soul! What wilt thou do for GOD? The freer the Condition is, He hath placed me in, the more am I both obliged and advantaged

vantaged for his Service; and yet I doubt it will be found, that many a poor Christian that labours to get his Bread, redeems more Hours for God than I do. **LORD,** make me wise to understand, and answer the double End of this gracious Dispensation! Let me bestow the more of my Time on God, and stand ready to administer to the Necessities of his People.



# **C H A P. XVII.**

## **Upon the Thrashing out of Corn.**

*More solid Grain with greater Strength you thrash;  
The ablest Christians have the hardest Lash.*

## **OBSERVATION.**

**H**USBANDMEN having to do with divers Sorts of Grain, some more tough and stubborn, others more free and tender, do not beat all alike in the Threshing-floors; but as they have Threshahs of several Sizes, so they bestow on some Grain more, on others fewer Strokes, according to the different Qualities of the Grain.

## **APPLICATION.**

**GOD** having to do in a Way of Correction with divers Sorts of Offenders, doth not use the like Severity with all, but proportions his Correction to their Abilities, *Jer. xxx. 11. I will not make a full*  
*End*



*End of thee, but will correct thee in Measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished, (q. d.)* Afflicted thou must be, my Respect to my own Glory and thy Good puts a Necessity upon that; but yet I will do it moderately, not without Measure or Mercy, as I intend to do upon the Enemies; but will mete out your Sufferings in a due Proportion, even as a careful Physician in prescribing Potions to his Patients, hath Regard as well to the Ability of the Patient, as to the Nature and Quality of the Disease; even so thy God, O *Israel*, will not afflict thee according to the Greatness of his Power, and his Wrath answerable thereunto; that would break thee to Pieces; nor yet will He afflict thee according to the Demerit of thy Sin. I that have instructed the Husbandman to proportion his Instruments to the Quality of the Grain before him, will exercise the like Wisdom and Mildness towards thee. And the Similitude betwixt the Husbandman's threshing his Corn, and the Lord's afflicting his People, stands in these Particulars:

1. THE Husbandman's End in threshing the Corn, is to separate it from the Husks and Chaff; and God's End in afflicting his People, is to separate them from their Sins. God uses Afflictions, as we use Soap, to cleanse away Filthiness, and fetch out Spots: He aims not at the Destruction of their Persons, but of their Lusts.

2. If the Husbandman has Cockle, Darnel, or Tares before him in the Floor among his Corn, he little regards whether it be bruised and battered to Pieces or no; it is a worthless Thing, and he spares it not. Such Cockle and Tares are the Enemies of God; and when these come under his Flail, He strikes them without Mercy; for these the Lord prepares a new sharp threshing Instrument,

ment, having Teeth, which shall beat them to Dust. And when that Time is come, then (in Allusion to the Beast that was to tread out the Corn) *Sion's Horn shall be of Iron, and her Hoofs Brasses*, Mic. iv. 13. He smites not his People, according to the Stroke of them that smote them; the Meaning is, his Strokes on them shall be deadly Strokes. They shewed no Mercy to *Sion*, and God will shew no Mercy to them.

3. WHEN the Husks and Chaff are perfectly separated from the Grain, then the Husbandman beats it no more. When God hath perfectly purged and separated the Sins of his People, then Afflictions shall come to a perpetual End; there is no Noise of the threshing Instrument; He that beat them with his Flail on Earth, will put them into his Bosom in Heaven.

4. THOUGH the Husbandman thresh and beat the Corn, yet he will not bruise or hurt it; though some require more and harder Strokes, yet none shall have more than it can endure. And though the LORD afflict his Servant, yet He will do them no Hurt. Some need more Rods than others, but none shall have more than they can bear: The LORD knows the Measures and Degrees of his Servants Faith and Patience, and accordingly shall their Trials be, *Psalm 137. 13, 14. Like as a Father pities his Children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear Him; for He knows their Frame, He remembers they are but Dust. He makes a Way to escape, that they may be able to bear*, 1 Cor. x. 13. This Care and Tenderness of God over his Afflicted, is eminently discovered in three Particulars:

(1.) In not exposing them to, 'till He has prepared them for their Trials, *Luke xxiv. 49. Tarry*

ye at Jerusalem, until ye be endued with Power from on high. He gives them sometimes eminent Discoveries of his Love immediately before, and as a Preparative to their Sufferings; in the Strength whereof, they are carried through all.

(2.) OR if not so, then He intermixeth supporting Comfort with their Troubles, as you sometimes see the Sun shine out while the Rain falls. It was so with St. Paul, Acts xxvii. 23. *This Night* (and it was a sad Night indeed) *there stood by me the Angel of the LORD, whose I am.*

(3.) IN taking off the Affliction, when they can bear it no longer. *He makes a Way to escape, that they may be able to bear it. The Rod is taken off, when the Righteous is even ready to put forth his Hand to Iniquity.* It is a Jewish Proverb, When the Bricks are doubled, then comes Moses. And it is a Christian Experience, When the Spirit is ready to fail, then comes Jesus.

### REFLECTIONS.

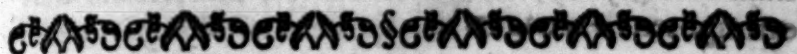
1. Is the LORD's Wheat thus threshed in the Floor of Affliction? What then shall I think of my Condition, who prosper, and am let alone in the Way of Sin? Surely, the LORD looks on me as on a Weed, and not as his Corn; and it is too probable, that I am rather reserved for Burning than Threshing. Miserable is their Condition, notwithstanding their Impunity; for what is the Interpretation but this? I will come to a Reckoning with them for all together in Hell. LORD, how much better is thy afflicting Mercy, than thy sparing Severity! Better is the Condition of an afflicted Child, than of a rejected Bastard. O let me rather feel thy Rod now, as the Rod of a loving Father, than



than feel thy Wrath hereafter, as the Wrath of an omnipotent Avenger.

2. WELL then, despond not, O my Soul, may an afflicted Christian say. Thou hearest the Husbandman loves his Corn, though he thresheth it; and surely the LORD loves thee not the less, because He afflicts thee so much. If Affliction then be the Way to Heaven, blessed be GOD for Affliction. The threshing Strokes of GOD come thick upon me, by which I may see what a stubborn Heart I have; if one Stroke would have done the Work, He would not have lifted up his Hand the second Time. I have not had a Stroke more than I had Need of; and by this Means He will purge my Sin; blessed be GOD for that. The Damned have infinitely more and harder Strokes than I, and yet their Sin shall never be separated by their Sufferings. Ah, Sin, cursed Sin, I am willing to endure more than all this to be well rid of thee; all this I suffer for thy Sake, but the Time is coming when I shall be rid of Sin and Suffering together.





CHAP. XIX.

Upon the Winnowing of Corn.

*The Fan doth cause light Chaff to fly away;  
So shall th' Ungodly in God's winnowing Day.*

OBSERVATION.

**W**HEN the Corn is threshed out in the Floor, where it lies mingled with empty Ears, and worthless Chaff, the Husbandman carries it out all into some open Place, where having spread his Sheet for the Preservation of the Grain, he exposes it all to the Wind; the good Grain, by Reason of its Solidity, remains upon the Sheet, but the Chaff being light and empty, is partly carried quite away by the Wind, and all the rest separated from the good Grain into a distinct Heap, which is carried away, either to the Fire or the Dunghill, as a worthless Thing.

APPLICATION.

MEN have their winnowing Days, and God hath His; a Day to separate the Chaff from the Wheat, the Godly from the Ungodly, who shall both be held up to the Wind, but only the Wicked shall be driven away by it. Such a Day God hath in this World, wherein He winnows his Wheat, and separates the Chaff. There is a double Fan-  
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ning or Winnowing of Men here in this World; one is *doctrinally*, in which Sense I understand that Scripture, *Matt. iii. 12.* spoken of *Christ*, when He was entering upon his ministerial Work. *His Fan is in his Hand, and He shall thoroughly purge his Floor, and gather his Wheat into the Garner, but He will burn up the Chaff with unquenchable Fire.* The Preaching of the Gospel is as a Fan in *Christ's* Hand; and it is as much as if *John* had told the *Jews*, that though there were many hypocritical ones among them, that had now a Name among the People of GOD, and gloried in their Church-Privileges, yet there was a purging Blast of Truth coming, which should make them fly out of the Church, as fast as Chaff out of the Floor. Thus *Christ* winnows or fans the World *doctrinally*. The other is *judicially*, by bringing grievous Trials and Sufferings upon the Churches, for this very End, that those which are but Chaff, *i. e.* empty and vain, may by such Winds be separated from his People.

THE Church increases two Ways, and by two divers Means, in Breadth and Numbers, and in Vigour and Power; Peace and Prosperity cause the first, Sufferings and Adversity the last; and well may a Day of Persecution be called a winnowing Day, for then are the People of GOD tossed to Purpose, as Corn in the Sieve, though Nothing but Chaff be lost thereby. Of such a winnowing Day the Prophet speaks, *Amos ix. 9, 10.* *I will sift the House of Israel among all Nations, like as Corn is sifted in a Sieve, yet shall not the least Grain fall upon the Earth; all the Sinners of my People shall die. (q. d.)* I will cause great Agitations and Tossings among you by the Hands of the *Assyrians* and *Babylonians*, into whose Countries you shall be scattered; yet I will so govern those your Disper-

sions



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sions by my Providence, that not one good Grain, one upright Soul shall perish; but the Sinners of my People, the Refuse shall perish.

To the same Purpose speaks another Prophet, *Zeph. i. 1, 2. Gather yourselves together, (or as some read) fan yourselves, yea, fan yourselves, before the Decree bring forth, and the Day pass as the Chaff.* He doth not mean, that the Time shall pass as the Chaff, but there is a Day of Affliction coming, in which the Wicked shall pass as the Chaff before the Wind; and yet, notwithstanding all these Winnowings upon Earth, much Chaff will still abide among the Corn; therefore GOD hath appointed another Day for the Winnowing of the World, even the Day of Judgment, in Reference to which it is said, *Psalms i. 4, 5. The Ungodly are not so, but are like the Chaff which the Wind drives away; therefore the Ungodly shall not stand in Judgment, nor Sinners in the Congregation of the Righteous: (i. e.)* GOD hath a Day wherein He will sift the World, like Corn in a Sieve; and then the Wicked shall appear to be but Chaff, which GOD will eternally separate from his Wheat. I will not strain the Similitude, but fairly display it in these Particulars:

1. **THE** Chaff and Wheat grow together in the same Field, and upon the same Root and Stalk. In this wicked Men are like Chaff, who not only associate with the People of GOD, but often spring up with them in the same Families, and from the same Root, or immediate Parents.

2. **THE** Chaff is a very worthless Thing; the Husbandman cares not what becomes of it: And of as little Worth are wicked Men, *Prov. x. 20. The Heart of the Wicked is little worth.* The Heart

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is the principal Part of the Man, and yet that is but Chaff, no Worth in it; his Lands, his Cloaths are worth Somewhat, but his Heart is worth Nothing.

3. **THOUGH** Chaff in itself be nothing worth, yet it is of some Use to the Corn while it is standing in the Field; the Stalk bears up the Ear, and the Chaff covers the Grain, and defends it from the Injury of the Weather. Thus **GOD** makes wicked Men of Use to his People, in outward Society; they help to support and protect them in this World, *Rev. xii. 16. The Earth helped the Woman; (i. e.)* worldly Men, for carnal Ends, helped the Church, when a Flood of Persecution was poured out. The Church often helps the World, it receives many Benefits from the People of **GOD**; and sometimes **GOD** over-rules the World to help his Church.

4. **WHEN** the Chaff and Wheat are both brought forth and held up in one Sieve, they fall two Ways; the Wheat falls down upon the Floor or Sheet, the Chaff is carried quite away: So although for a Time the Godly and Ungodly abide together, yet when this winnowing Time comes, **GOD's** Wheat shall be gathered into his Garner in Heaven, the Chaff shall go the other Way, *Matt. iii, 12.*

## **R E F L E C T I O N S.**

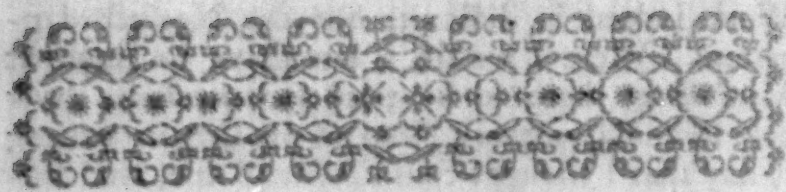
Is there such a fanning Time coming? Why do not I then sift my Heart every Day by serious Self-examination? No Work more important to me, and yet how much have I neglected it? O my Soul! thou hadst been better employed, in searching thine own Estate in Reference to that Day, than in prying into the Hearts, and censuring the Conditions

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ditions of other Men: Judge thyself, and thou shalt not be condemned with the World: The Work indeed is difficult, but the Neglect dangerous. Were I within a few Days to stand at Man's Bar, there to be tried for my Life, how busy should I be every Hour of the Day in writing to any that I thought could befriend me, and studying every Advantage to myself? And yet, what a vast Difference is there betwixt Man's Bar and God's? Betwixt a Trial for my Life, and for my Soul? LORD, rouse up my sluggish Heart by awful and sollicitous Thoughts of that Day, lest I be found among that Chaff which shall be burnt up with unquenchable Fire!







# Husbandry Spiritualized.

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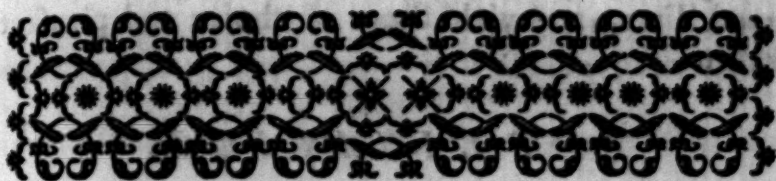
## CHAP. I.

Upon the Ingrafting of Fruit-Trees.

Ungrafted Trees can never bear Fruit  
Nor we'll grafted on a better Root.

## OBSERVATION.

**A** Wild Tree, naturally springing up in the  
Wood or Hedge, and never grafted or re-  
moved from its native Soil, may bear  
some Fruit, and that fair and beautiful to the Eye,  
but it will give you no Content at all in Eating;  
being always harsh, and unpleasant to the Taste;  
but



# Husbandry Spiritualized.

## PART II.

### CHAP. I.

#### Upon the Ingrafting of Fruit-Trees.

*Ungrafted Trees can never bear good Fruit,  
Nor we 'till grafted on a better Root.*

#### OBSERVATION.

**A** WILD Tree, naturally springing up in the Wood or Hedge, and never grafted or removed from its native Soil, may bear some Fruit, and that fair and beautiful to the Eye, but it will give you no Content at all in Eating, being always harsh, and unpleasant to the Taste; but

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but if such a Stock be removed into a good Soil, and grafted with a better Kind, it may become a good Tree, and yield Store of choice and pleasant Fruit.

**APPLICATION.**

**MEN** who never were acquainted with the Mystery of spiritual Union with *Christ*, but still grow upon their natural Root, may by the Power of natural Principles bring forth some Fruit, which, like wild Hedge-Fruit, may indeed be fair and pleasant to the Eyes of Men, but **GOD** takes no Pleasure at all in it; it is sour, and distasteful to Him, because it springs not from the Spirit of *Christ*. I shall set before you a Parallell betwixt the best Fruits of natural Men, and those of a wild ungrafted Tree.

**I. THE** Root that bears this wild Fruit, is a degenerate Root, and that is the Cause of all this Sourness and Harshness in the Fruit: So all the Fruits of unregenerate Men flow from the first *Adam*, a corrupt and degenerate Root; he was indeed planted a right Seed, but soon turned a wild and degenerate Plant; he being the Root from which every Man naturally springs, corrupts all the Fruit that any Man bears from him. *A corrupt Tree cannot bring forth good Fruit.*

**2. THIS** corrupt Root spoils the Fruit, by the Transmission of its sour Sap into all the Branches and Fruits that grow on them; they suck no other Nourishment, but what the Root affords them; and that being bad, spoils all: For the same Cause, no mere natural Man can ever do one holy or acceptable Action, because the Corruption of the Root is in all those Actions. The Necessity of our



our drawing Corruption into all our Actions, from this cursed Root, is expressed by a quick Interrogation, *Job xiv. 4. Who can bring a clean Thing out of an unclean? Not one.* The Sense of it is well delivered us by Mr. Caryl: "This Question (saith he) may undergo a twofold Construction: First, thus: Who can bring a morally clean Person, out of a Person originally unclean? And so he lays his Hand upon his Birth-Sin. Or, Secondly, it may refer to the Action of the same Man; Man being unclean, cannot bring forth a clean Thing; i. e. a clean or holy Action." And that this sour Sap of the first Stock (I mean *Adam's Sin*) is transmitted into all Mankind, not only corrupting their Fruit, but ruining and withering all the Branches; the Apostle shews us in that excellent Parallell betwixt the two *Adams*, *Rom. v. 12.*

3. ALTHOUGH these wild Hedge-Fruits be unwholesome and unpleasant to the Taste, yet they are fair and beautiful to the Eye; a Man that looks upon them, and doth not know what Fruit it is, would judge it by its Shew to be excellent Fruit; for it makes a fairer Shew often than the best and most wholesome Fruit doth: Even so, those natural Gifts which some unregenerate Persons have, seem exceeding fair to the Eye, and a Fruit to be desired. What curious Phantasies, nimble Wits, solid Judgments, tenacious Memories, rare Elocution, &c. are to be found among mere natural Men? By which they are assisted in Discourfing, Praying, Preaching, and Writing, to the Admiration of such as know them! But *that which is highly esteemed of Men, is Abomination to God*: It finds no Acceptance with Him, because it springs from that cursed Root of Nature, and is not the Production of his own Spirit.

4. *Root is in all those Actions, because the Corruption of the*

4. If such a Stock were removed into a better Soil, and grafted with a better Kind, it might bring forth Fruit pleasant and grateful to the Husbandman; and if such Persons were but regenerated, what excellent and useful Persons would they be in the Church of GOD? And then their Fruits would be sweet and acceptable to Him. One observes of *Tertullian*, *Origen* and *Jerom*, that they came into *Canaan* laden with *Egyptian* Gold; *i. e.* they came into the Church full of excellent human Learning, which did *Christ* much Service.

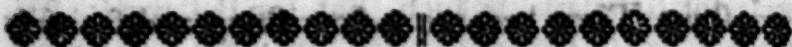
5. WHEN the Husbandman cuts down his Woods or Hedges, he cuts down these Crab-stocks with the rest, because he values them not any more than the Thorns and Brambles among which they grow: And as little will GOD regard or spare these natural Branches, how much soever they are laden with such Fruit. The Threatning is universal, *Except you be born again, you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.* And again, *Heb. xii. 14. Without Holiness, no Man* (be his natural Gifts never so excellent) *shall see GOD.* Embellished Nature, is Nature still: *That which is born of the Flesh, is but Flesh*, however it be set off with Advantage to the Eye of Man.

### R E F L E C T I O N S.

To what a Purpose then, may a natural Man say, do I glory in my natural Accomplishments? Though I have a better Nature than some others have, yet it is a cursed Nature still. These sweet Qualities and excellent Gifts, do only hide, but not kill the Corruption of Nature. I am but a rotten Post gilded over, and all my Duties but Hedge-Fruit, which God makes no Account of. O cutting Thought! that the Unlearned shall rise and

and take Heaven, when I with all my excellent Gifts shall descend into Hell. Heaven was not made for Scholars, as such, but for Believers: As one said, when they comforted him upon his Death-Bed, that he was a knowing Man, a *Doctor of Divinity*: "O, said he, I shall not appear before God as a *Doctor*, but as a Man; I shall stand upon a Level with the most Illiterate in the Day of Judgment: What doth it avail me, that I have a nimble Wit, whilst I have none to do myself good? Will my Judge be charmed with a rhetorical Tongue? Things will not be carried in that World as they are in this." If I could, with *Berengarius*, discourse of every Thing that is knowable; or, with *Solomon*, unravel Nature, from the *Cedar* to the *Hyssop*; what would this advantage me, as long as I am ignorant of *Christ*, and the Mystery of Regeneration? My Head hath often ached with Study, but when did my Heart ach for Sin? Methinks, O my Soul, thou trimmest up thyself in these natural Ornaments to appear before God, as delicate *Agag* did, when he was to come before *Samuel*, and fondly conceitest that these Things will procure Favour, or at least Pity from him; but yet, think not for all that, *the Bitterness of Death is past*. Say not within thyself, Will God cast such an one into Hell? Shall a Man of such Parts be damned? Alas! Justice will hew thee to Pieces, as *Samuel* did that King, and not abate thee the least, for these Things: Many thousand Branches of Nature, as fair and fruitful as thyself, are now blazing in Hell, because not transplanted by Regeneration into *Christ*; and if He spared not them, neither will He spare thee.





## C H A P. II.

Upon the Union of the Graff with the Stock.

*When'er you bud or graft, therein you see,  
How Christ and Souls must here united be.*

## O B S E R V A T I O N.

**W**HEN the Husbandman hath prepared his Graffs in the Season, he carries them, with the Tools that are necessary, to the Tree or Stock he intends to ingraft, and having cut off the Top of the Limb, in some strait smooth Part, he cleaves it with his Knife or Chissel a little beside the Pith, knocks in his Wedge to keep it open, then (having prepared the Graff) he carefully sets it into the Cleft, joining the inner Side of the Barks of Graff or Stock together, (there being the main Current of the Sap) then pulls out his Wedge, binds both together, and clays it up, to defend the tender Graff and wounded Stock from the Injuries of the Sun and Rain.

THESE tender Ciens quickly take Hold of the Stock, and having immediate Coalition with it, drinks in its Sap, concoct it into their own Nourishment, thrive better, and bear more and better Fruits than ever they would have done upon their natural

natural Root; yea, the smallest Bud being carefully inoculated and bound close to the Stock, will in a short Time become a flourishing and fruitful Limb.

### A P P L I C A T I O N.

THIS carries a lively Resemblance of the Soul's Union with *Christ* by Faith: And indeed there is Nothing in Nature that shadows forth this great Gospel-Mystery like it: It is a thousand Pities that any who are employed about, or are but Spectators of such an Action, should terminate their Thoughts (as too many do) in that natural Object, and not raise up their Hearts to these heavenly Meditations, which it so fairly offers them.

1. WHEN a Twig is to be ingrafted, or a Bud inoculated, it is first cut off by a keen Knife from the Tree on which it naturally grew.

AND when the LORD intends to graft a Soul into *Christ*, the first Work about it is cutting Work, *Acts* ii. 37. their Hearts were cut by Conviction and deep Compunction; no Cien is ingrafted without cutting, no Soul united with *Christ* without a cutting Sense of Sin and Misery.

2. WHEN the Grafts are cut off, in order to this Work, it is a critical Season with them; if they lie too long before they are ingrafted, or take not with the Stock, they die, and are never more to be recovered; they may stand in the Stock a While, but are no Part of the Tree.

So when Souls are under a Work of Conviction, it is a critical Time with them: Many a one have I known then to miscarry, and never recovered  
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again; they have indeed for a Time stood like dead Graffs in the Stock, by an external Profession, but never came to any Thing; and as such dead Graffs either fall off from the Stock, or moulder away upon it, so do these.

3. THE Husbandman when he hath cut off Graffs or tender Buds, makes all the convenient Speed he can to close them with the Stock; the sooner that is done, the better; they get no Good by remaining as they are.

AND truly it concerns the Servants of the LORD, who are employed in this Work of ingrafting Souls into *Christ*, to make all the Haste they can to bring the convicted Sinner to a Closure with *Christ*. As soon as ever the trembling Jailor cried out, *What shall I do to be saved?* Paul and Silas immediately direct him to *Christ*, Acts xvi. 30, 31. They do not say, it is too soon for thee to have Faith in *Christ*, thou art not yet humbled enough; but, *believe in the LORD Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*

4. THERE must be an Incision made in the Stock before any Bud can be inoculated; or the Stock must be cut and cleaved, before the Cien can be ingrafted.

SUCH an Incision or Wound was made upon *Christ*, in order to our ingrafting into Him, John xix. 34. The Opening of that deadly Wound gives Life to the Souls of Believers.

5. THE Graff is intimately united, and closely conjoined with the Stock; the Conjunction is so close, that they become one Tree.

THERE



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THERE is also a most close and intimate Union betwixt *Christ* and the Soul that believeth in Him. It is emphatically expressed by the Apostle, 1 Cor. vi. 17. *He that is joined to the LORD, is one Spirit.* The Word imports the nearest, closest and strictest Union. *Christ* and the Soul cleave together in a blessed Oneness, as those Things do that are glued one to another; so that, look as the Graff is really in the Stock, and the Spirit or Sap of the Stock is really in the Graff, so a Believer is really (though mystically) in *Christ*; and the Spirit of *Christ* is really communicated to a Believer. *I live,* (saith St. Paul) *yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. He that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

6. THOUGH the Stock be one and the same, yet all Graffs do not thrive and flourish alike in it; some out-grow the rest; and those that grow not so well as the others do, the Fault is in them, and not in the Stock.

So it is with Souls really united to *Christ*; all do not flourish alike in Him, the Faith of some grows exceedingly, 2 Thes. i. 3. the Things that be in others are ready to die, Rev. iii. 2. and such Souls must charge the Fault upon themselves. *Christ* sends up living Sap enough, not only to make all that are in Him living, but fruitful Branches.

### R E F L E C T I O N S.

1. Is it so indeed betwixt *Christ* and my Soul, as it is betwixt the ingrafted Cien and the Stock? What Honour and Glory then hath *Christ* conferred upon me, a poor unworthy Creature? What! to be made one with Him, to be a living Branch of Him, to be joined thus to the LORD. O what a

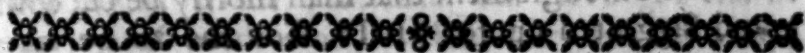
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Preferment is this! It is but a little While since I was a wild and cursed Plant, growing in the Wilderness amongst them that shall shortly be cut down and faggotted up for Hell: For me to be taken from amongst them, and planted into *Christ*, O my Soul! fall down and kiss the Feet of Free Grace, that moved so freely towards so vile a Creature! The Dignities and Honours of the Kings and Nobles of the Earth, are Nothing to mine. It was truly confessed by one of them, that it is a greater Honour to be a Member of *Christ*, than the Head of an Empire. Do I say, a greater Honour than is put upon the Kings of the Earth? I might have said, it is a greater Honour than is put upon the Angels of Heaven: For to which of them said *Christ* at any Time, *Thou art Bone of my Bone, and Flesh of my Flesh?* Behold, what Manner of Love is this!

2. AM I joined to the LORD, as a mystical Part or Branch of Him? How dear art thou then, O my Soul, to the GOD and Father of my LORD *Jesus Christ*? What! a Branch of his dear Son! What can GOD with-hold from one so ingrafted? *Eph. i. 6. All is yours, (saith my GOD) for ye are Christ's, and Christ is GOD's, 1 Cor. iii. 23.*



Thus bears the LORD by fields and barren  
Producers, who do but cumber his Ground, that  
is to be made up of the Rock of the Root of  
the Tree; therefore every Tree that brings not forth  
is hewn down, and cast into the Fire.  
And



CHAP. III.

Upon the Cutting down of Dead Trees.

*Dead barren Trees you for the Fire prepare;  
In such a Case all fruitless Persons are.*

OBSERVATION.

**A**FTER many Years Patience, in the Use of all Means to recover a Fruit-Tree, if the Husbandman see it be quite dead, and that there can be no more Expectation of any Fruit from it, he brings his Ax and hews it down by the Root; and from the Orchard it is carried to the Fire, it being then fit for Nothing else; he reckons it imprudent to let such a useless Tree abide in good Ground, where another might be planted, that will better pay for the Ground it stands in. I myself once saw a large Orchard of fair, but fruitless Trees, all rooted up, riven abroad, and ricked up for the Fire.

APPLICATION.

THUS deals the LORD by useless and barren Professors, who do but cumber his Ground, *Matt. iii. 10. And now also the Ax is laid to the Root of the Trees; therefore every Tree that brings not forth good Fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the Fire.*



And *Luke xiii. 7.* Then said the Dresseſſer of the Vineyard, Behold, this three Years I came seeking Fruit on this Fig-Tree, and find none; cut it down, why cumbereth it the Ground? These three Years, alluding to the Time of his Ministry, He being at that Time entering upon his last half Year, as one observes: So long He had waited for the Fruit of his Ministry among those dead-hearted Jews; now his Patience is even at an End; cut them down, (saith He) why cumber they the Ground? I will plant others (*viz.* the Gentiles) in their Room. This hewing down of the barren Tree doth in a lively Manner shadow forth GOD's judicial Proceedings against formal Professors under the Gospel; and the Resemblance clearly holds in these following Particulars.

1. THE Tree that is to be hewn down for the Fire, stands in the Orchard among other flourishing Trees, where it hath enjoyed the Benefit of a good Soil, a strong Fence, and much Culture; but being barren, these Privileges secure it not from the Fire.

It is not our standing in the visible Church, by a powerless Profession, among real Saints, with whom we have been associated, and enjoyed the excellent Waterings of Ordinances that can secure us from the Wrath of GOD, *Matt. iii. 8, 9.* Bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance, and think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our Father. Neither Abraham, nor Abraham's GOD, will acknowledge such degenerate Children: If Abraham's Faith be not in your Hearts, it will be no Advantage that Abraham's Blood runs in your Veins. It will be a poor Plea for Judas, when he shall stand before Christ in Judgment, to say, LORD, I was

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one of thy Family, I preached for Thee, I did eat and drink in thy Presence.

2. THE Husbandman doth not presently cut down the Tree, because it puts not forth as soon as other Trees do, but waits as long as there is any Hope, and then cuts it down.

THUS doth GOD wait upon barren Persons, from Sabbath to Sabbath, and from Year to Year; for the LORD is long-suffering to us-ward, and not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance. Thus the Long-suffering of GOD waited in the Days of Noah upon those dry Trees, who are now smoaking and flaming in Hell, 1 Pet. iii. 20. He waits long on Sinners, but keeps exact Accounts of every Year and Day of his Patience.

3. WHEN the Time is come to cut it down, the dead Tree cannot possibly resist the Stroke of the Ax, but receives the Blow, and falls before it.

No more can the stoutest Sinner resist the Stroke of Death, by which the LORD hews it down, Eccles. viii. 8. *There is no Man that hath Power over the Spirit, to retain the Spirit; neither hath he Power in the Day of Death, and there is no Discharge in that War.* When the pale Horse comes, away you must into the Land of Darkness: Thou cry with *Adrian*, O my poor Soul, whither art thou going! Die thou must, thou barren Professor; though it were better for thee to do any Thing else than to die. What a dreadful Shriek will thy Conscience give, when it sees the Ax at thy Root! When it is said to thee, *Ezek. vii. 6, An End is come, the End is come; it watcheth for thee, behold it is come.* O, said *Henry Beauford*, (that rich and wretched Cardinal, Bishop of Winchester, and

and Chancellor of England) wherefore must I die? If the whole Realm would save my Life, I am able either by Policy to get it, or by Riches to buy it. Fye, will not Death be hired? Will Riches do Nothing? No, neither Riches nor Policy then avail?

4. THAT Side to which the Tree leaned most while it stood, that Way it will fall when it is cut down; and *as it falls, so it lies, whether to the South or North*, Eccles. xi. 3.

So it fares with these mystical Trees, I mean, fruitless Professors. Had their Hearts and Affections bended Heaven-ward whilst they lived, that Way no Doubt they had fallen at their Death; but as their Hearts ever bended to the World, so when GOD gives the fatal Stroke, they must fall Hell-ward; and how dreadful will such a Fall be?

*Consider this, ye that forget GOD, lest I tear (or rend) you in Pieces*, Psalm I. 22. O direful Day! when the same Hand which planted, pruned, and watered thee so long, and so tenderly, shall now strike mortal Strokes at thee, and that without Pity: *For He that made them will not have Mercy on them, and He that formed them will shew them no Favour*, Isaiah xxvii. 11. For the Day of Mercy is over, and the Day of his Wrath is fully come.

5. AND Lastly, The fruitless Tree is cast into the Fire.

THIS is also the End of Formality. *He is cast forth as a Branch, and is withered, and Men gather them and cast them into the Fire, and they are burned.* This is an undoubted Truth, that there is no Plant in GOD's Vineyard, but He will have Glory from it,



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it, by bearing Fruit; or Glory on it, by burning in the Fire. In this Fire shall they lie *gnashing their Teeth*; and that both in Indignation against the Saints, whom they shall see in Glory, and against *Jesus Christ*, and against themselves, for losing so foolishly the Opportunities of Salvation. Do you behold when you sit by the Fire, the Froth that boils out of those flaming Logs? O think of that Foam and Rage of these undone Creatures, foaming and *gnashing their Teeth in that Fire which is not quenched.*

### REFLECTION.

How often have I passed by such barren Trees, may one say, with a more barren Heart? As little thinking such a Tree to be the Emblem of myself, as *Nebuchadnezzar* did, when he saw that Tree in a Dream which represented himself, and shadowed forth to him his ensuing Misery, *Dan. iv. 13.* But, O my Conscience! my sleepy Conscience! wert thou but tender and faithful to me, thou wouldst make as terrible an Application of such a Spectacle to me, as the faithful Prophet did to him, *Verse 22.* And thus wouldst thou bemoan thy Condition!

POOR Wretch, here I grow for a little Time; among the Trees of Righteousness, the Plants of Renown; but I am none of them: Some green and flourishing Leafs indeed I have, which deceive others, but GOD cannot be deceived; He sees I am fruitless, and rotten at the Heart. Poor Soul, what will thine End be but Burning! Behold, the Ax lieth by the Root, and Wonder it is, that there it should lie so long, and I yet standing! Still Mercy pleads for a fruitless Creature; LORD, spare

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spare it one Year longer. Alas! He need strike no great Blow to ruin me, his very Breath blows to Destruction, *Job* iv. 9. A Frown of his Face can blast and ruin me, *Psalms* lxxx. 6. He is daily sollicit'd by his Justice to hew me down, and yet I stand. LORD, cure my Barrenness; I know Thou hadst rather see Fruit than Fire upon me.

Husbandry Spiritualiz'd

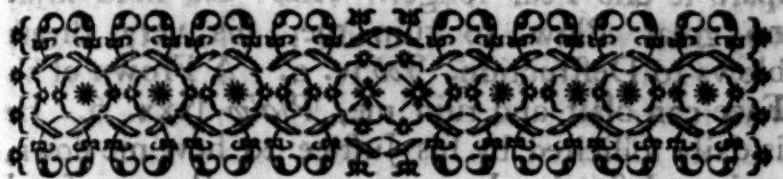
## REFLECTION

How often have I galled by such barren Years  
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MANY Husbandmen are excessively careful about their Cattle, tending themselves early in the morning, and causing their servants to be ready to feed and dress them. Much Time is spent in some Countries in adorning their Houses with curious Tappings and Paints of Feathers; and

Husbandry



# Husbandry Spiritualized.

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## \*\*\*\*\* P A R T III \*\*\*\*\*

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### C H A P. I.

Upon the Husbandman's Care for his Cattle.

*More Care for Horse and Oxen many take,  
Than for their own, or dearest Childrens Sake.*

### O B S E R V A T I O N.

**M**ANY Husbandmen are excessively careful about their Cattle, rising themselves early, or causing their Servants to rise betimes to feed and dress them. Much Time is spent in some Countries in adorning their Horses with curious Trappings and Plumes of Feathers; and



and if at any Time a Beast be sick, what Care is taken to recover and heal them? You will be sure they shall want Nothing that is necessary for them; yea, many will chuse rather to want themselves, than suffer their Horses so to do; and take a great deal of Comfort to see them thrive and prosper under their Hands.

### APPLICATION.

WHAT one said of bloody *Herod*, who slew so many Children at *Bethlehem*, That it were better to be his Swine than his Son, may be truly enough applied to some Parents and Masters, who take less Care for the saving the Souls of their Children and Servants, than they do for the Bodies of those Beasts which daily feed at their Stalls. Many there be who do in Reference to their Souls, as *Jacob* did, with Respect to the Preservation of their Bodies, when he put all the Herds of Cattle before, and his Wives and little ones behind, as he went to meet his Brother *Esau*. It is a weighty Saying of a grave Author, "It is vile Ingratitude  
 " to rejoice when Cattle multiply, and repine  
 " when Children increase; it is Heathenish Dis-  
 " trust to fear, that He who provides for your  
 " Beasts, will not provide for your Children; and  
 " it is no less than unnatural Cruelty, to be care-  
 " ful for the Bodies of Beasts, and careless of  
 " the Souls of Children." Let us but a little compare your Care and Diligence in both Respects, and see in a few Particulars, whether you do indeed value your own, or your Children and Servants Souls, as you do the Life and Health of a Beast.

I. YOUR Care for your very Horses is expressed early, whilst they are but Colts, and not come to do

do you any Service ; you are willing to be at Pains and Cost to have them broken and brought to their Way. This is more than ever many of them did for their Children ; they can see them wild and profane, naturally taking to Wickedness, but yet never were at any Pains or Cost to break them ; these must be cockered up in the natural Way of their own Corruption and Wickedness, and not a Rod or Reproof used to break them of it.

It is observed of the *Persians*, that they put out their Children to School as soon as they could speak, and would not see them in seven Years after, lest their Indulgence should do them Hurt.

2. You keep your constant Morning and Evening, to feed, water, and dress your Cattle, and will by no Means neglect it once ; but how many Times have you neglected Morning and Evening Duties in your Families ? Yea, how many be there, whose very Tables, in Respect of any Worship God hath there, very little differ from the very Cribs and Mangers at which their Horses feed ? As soon as you are up in a Morning, you are with your Beasts before you have been with your God ; how little do such differ from Beasts ? And happy were it, if they were no more accountable to God than their Beast are ?

THE End of your Care, Cost and Pains about your Cattle is, that they may be strong for Labour, and the more serviceable to you ; thus you comply with the End of their Beings. But how rare a Thing is it to find these Men as careful to fit their Posterity to be serviceable to God in their Generations, which is the End of their Beings ? If you can make them rich, and provide good Matches for them, you reckon that you have fully

discharged the Duty of Parents; if they will learn to hold the Plow, that you are willing to teach them; but when did you spend an Hour to teach them the Way of Salvation?

Now to convince such careless Parents of the Heinousness of their Sin, let these four Queries be solemnly considered:

*Qu. 1.* WHETHER this be a sufficient Discharge of that great Duty which GOD hath laid upon Christian Parents, in Reference to their Families? That GOD hath charged them with the Souls of their Families is undeniable, *Deut. vi. 6, 7. Eph. vi. 4.* If GOD hath not cloathed you with his Authority to command them in the Way of the LORD, He would never have charged them so strictly to yield you Obedience as He hath done, *Eph. vi. 1. Col. iii. 20.* Well, a great Trust is reposed in you, look to your Duty; for without Dispute you shall answer for it.

*Qu. 2.* WHETHER it be likely, if the Time of Youth (which is the moulding Age) be neglected, they will be wrought upon to any Good afterwards? Husbandmen, let me put a sensible Case to you; Do you not see your very Horses, that whilst they are young you can bring them to any Way; but if once they have got a false Stroke, and by long Custom it be grown natural to them, then there is no breaking them of it: Yea, you see it in your very Orchards, you may bring a tender Twig to grow in what Form you please; but when it is grown to a sturdy Limb, there is no bending it afterwards to any other Form. Thus it is with Children, *Prov. xxiii. 6. Train up a Child in the Way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*

*Qu. 3.*



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Qu. 3. WHETHER, if you neglect to instruct them in the Way of the LORD, *Satan*, and their own natural Corruptions, will not instruct them in the Way to Hell? Consider this, ye careless Parents; if you will not teach your Children, the Devil will teach them; if you shew them not how to pray, he will shew them how to curse and swear, and take the Name of the LORD in vain; if you grudge Time and Pains about their Souls, the Devil doth not. Oh, it is a sad Consideration, that so many Children should be put to School to the Devil!

Qu. 4. WHAT Comfort are you like to have from them when they are old, if you bring them not up in the Nurture and Admonition of the LORD when they are young? Many Parents have lived to reap in their old Age, the Fruit of their own Folly and Carelessness, in the loose Education of their Children. By *Lycurgus's* Law, no Parent was to be relieved by his Children in Age, if he gave them not good Education in their Youth: and it is a Law at this Day among the *Switzers*, That if any Child be condemned to die for a capital Offence, the Parents of that Child are to be his Executioners; these Laws were made to provoke Parents to look better to their Charge. Believe this as an undoubted Truth, That *that* Child which becomes (thro' thy Default) an Instrument to dishonour GOD, shall prove, sooner or later, a Son or Daughter of Sorrow to thee.

REFLECTIONS.

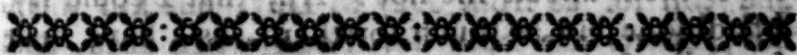
1. GOD hath found out my Sin this Day, may a careless Parent say. This hath been my Practice ever since I had a Family committed to my Charge; I have spent more Time and Pains about

the Bodies of my Beasts, than the Souls of my Children; Beast that I am for so doing; little have I considered the Preciousness of my own, or their immortal Souls. How careful have I been to provide Fodder to preserve my Cattle in the Winter, whilst I leave my own and their Souls to perish to Eternity, and make no Provision for them? Surely my Children will one Day curse the Time that ever they were born unto such a cruel Father, or of such a merciless Mother. Should I bring Home the Plague into my Family, and live to see all my poor Children lie dead by the Walls, if I had not the Heart of a Tyger, such a Sight would melt my Heart; and yet the Death of their Souls by the Sin which I propagated to them affects me not! Ah, that I could say, I had done but as much for them, as I have done for a Beast that perisheth!

2. BUT unhappy Wretch that I am, GOD cast a better Lot for me, (may many a Child say) I am the Offspring of religious and tender Parents, who have always deeply concerned themselves in the everlasting State of my Soul; many Prayers and Tears have they poured out to GOD for me, in my Hearing as well as in secret; many wholesome Counsels have they from Time to Time dropt upon me; many precious Examples have they set in their own Practice before me; many a Time when I have sinned against the LORD, have they stood over me with a Rod in their Hands, and Tears in their Eyes, using all Means to reclaim me, but like an ungracious Wretch I have slighted all their Counsels, grieved their Hearts, and embittered their Lives to them. Ah, my Soul! thou art a degenerate Plant; better will it be with the Offspring of Infidels than with thee; if Repentance prevent not; now I live in one Family

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Family with them, but shortly I shall be separated from them, as far as Hell is from Heaven; they now tenderly pity my Misery, but then they shall approve and applaud the righteous Sentence of *Christ* upon me. So little Privilege shall I then have from my Relation to them, that they shall be produced as Witnesses against me, and all their rejected Counsels, Reproofs, and Examples, charged home upon me, as the Aggravations of my Wickedness; and better it will be, when it shall come to that, that I had been brought forth by a Beast, than sprang from the Loins of such Parents.



C H A P. II.

Upon the hard Labour and cruel Usage of Beasts.

*When under Loads your Beasts do groan, think then  
How great a Mercy 'tis that you are Men.*

O B S E R V A T I O N.

**T**HOUGH some Men be excessively careful and tender over their Beasts, yet others are cruel and merciless towards them. How often have I seen them fainting under their Loads, wrought off their Legs, and turned out with galled Backs into the Fields or Highways? Many Times have I heard and pitied them, groaning under unreasonable Burdens, and beaten on by merciless Drivers,



'till at last by such cruel Usage they have been destroyed, and then cast into a Ditch for Dogs Meat.

### APPLICATION.

SUCH Sights as these should make Men thankful for the Mercy of their Creation, and bless their bountiful Creator, that they were not made such Creatures themselves. Some Beasts are made only for Food, being no otherwise useful to Men, as *Swine*. These are only fed for Slaughter, we kill and eat them, and regard not their Cries when the Knife is thrust to their very Hearts; others are only for Service, whilst living, but unprofitable when dead; as *Horses*, these we make to drudge and toil for us from Day to Day, but kill them not; others are both for Food when dead, and Service whilst alive, as the *Ox*. These we make to plow our Fields, draw our Carriages, and afterwards prepare them for Slaughter.

BUT Man was made for nobler Ends, created Lord of the lower World; not to serve, but to be served by other Creatures; a Mercy able to melt the hardest Heart into Thankfulness. I remember, *Luther* pressing Men to be thankful, that they are not brought into the lowest Condition of Creatures, and to bless God that they can see any Creature below themselves, gives us a famous Instance in the following Story: "Two Cardinals (saith he) riding in a great deal of Pomp to the Council of *Constance*, by the Way heard a Man in the Field, weeping and wailing bitterly. They rode to him, and asked him what he ailed? Perceiving his Eye intently fixed upon a Toad, he told them that his Heart was melted with the Consideration of this Mercy, that God had not made him such a deformed and loathsome Creature, though he  
were

were formed out of the same Clay with it: This is that *that* makes me weep bitterly." Whereupon one of the *Cardinals* cries out, "Well said the Father, the Unlearned will rise and thank Heaven, when we with all our Learning shall be thrust into Hell." That which melted the Heart of this poor Man, should melt every Heart when we behold the Misery to which these poor Creatures are subjected. And this will appear a Mercy of no slight Consideration, if we draw a Comparison betwixt ourselves, and these irrational Creatures.

1. **THOUGH** they and we were made of the same Clay, yet how much better hath God dealt with us, even as to the outward Man? The Structure of our Bodies are much more excellent. The noble Structure and Symetry of our Bodies invites our Souls not only to Thankfulness but Admiration. *David* speaking of the curious Frame of the Body, saith, *I am wonderfully made, Psal. cxxxix.* 14. or as the Vulgar reads it, painted as with a Needle; like some rich Piece of Needle-work curiously embroidered with Nerves and Veins. Was any Part of the common Lump of Clay thus fashioned? *Galen* gave *Epicurus* an hundred Years Time to imagine a more commodious Situation, Configuration, or Composition of any one Part of a human Body; and (as one saith) if all the Angels in Heaven had studied to this Day, they could not have cast the Body of Man into a more curious Mould.

2. **How little Ease or Rest have they?** They live not many Years, and those that do, it is in Bondage and Misery, groaning under the Effects of Sin; but God hath provided better for us, even as to our outward Condition; we have the more Rest, because they have so little. How many

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ny Refreshments and Comforts hath GOD provided for us, of which they are incapable? If we be weary with Labour, we can take our Rest; but fresh or weary, they must stand to it, or sink under it from Day to Day.

3. WHAT a narrow Capacity hath GOD given to Beasts! What a large Capacity to Man! Alas, they are only capable of a little sensitive Pleasure; this is all they be capable of, and this Death puts and End to; but how comprehensive are our Souls in their Capacities? We are made in the Image of GOD, we can look beyond present Things, and are capable of the highest Happiness, and that to all Eternity; the Soul of a Beast must probably die with the Body; but our Souls are a Divine Spark; and when the Body dies, die not with it, but subsist even in its separated State,

### REFLECTIONS.

1. How great a Sin, may an unthankful Sinner say, is Ingratitude to GOD, for such a common, but choice Mercy of Creation, and Provision for me in this World? There is no Creature made worse by Kindness, but Man. There is a Kind of Gratitude even in brute Beasts; they do in their Way acknowledge their Benefactors; *the Ox knows his Owner, and the Ass his Master's Crib.* How ready are they to serve such as feed and cherish them? But I have been both unthankful and unserviceable to my Creator and Benefactor, that hath done me Good all my Days; those poor Creatures that sweat and groan under the Loads that I lay upon them, never sinned against GOD, nor transgressed the Laws of their Creation, as I have done; and yet GOD hath dealt better with me than with them. O that the Bounty of GOD,  
and



and his distinguishing Mercy between me and the Beasts that perish, might move and melt my Heart into Thankfulness ! O that I might consider seriously what the more excellent End of my Creation is, and might more endeavour to answer it ! Or else (O my Soul) it will be worse with thee than with the Beasts. It is true, they are under Bondage and Misery ; but it is but for a little Time, Death will end all their Pains, and ease them of all their heavy Loads ; but I shall groan to all Eternity, under a heavier Burden than ever they felt ; they have no Account to give, but I have. What Comfort is it that I have a larger Capacity than a Beast hath ? That God hath endowed me with Reason, which is denied to them ? Alas ! this will but augment my Misery, and enlarge me to take in a greater Measure of Anguish.

2. BUT how many Steps (O my Soul) mayst thou ascend in the Praises of thy God, may a Believer say, when thou considerest the Mercies that God hath bestowed upon thee ! Not only in that He made thee, not a Stone or Tree without Sense, or an Horse or Dog without Reason ; but that thou art not an Infidel without Light, or an unregenerate Person without Grace. What ! to have Sense, and all the Delights of it, which Stones have not ; Reason, with the more noble Pleasures of it, which Beasts have not ; and such a Hope of inconceivable Glory, which the Unsanctified have not ! O my Soul ! how rich ! how bountiful hath thy God been to thee ! These are the Overflowings of his Love to thee, who wast moulded out of the same Lump with the Beasts that groan on Earth ; yea with the Damned that howl in Hell : Well may I say, that God hath been a good God to me.



### C H A P. III.

#### Upon the Seeking of lost Cattle.

*When seeking your lost Cattle, keep in Mind  
That thus Christ Jesus seeks your Souls to find.*

#### O B S E R V A T I O N.

**W**HEN Cattle are strayed from your Fields, you use all Care and Diligence to recover them, tracing their Footsteps, sending your Servants abroad, and enquiring yourselves of all that you think can give News of them.

#### A P P L I C A T I O N.

THE Care and Pains you take to recover your lost Cattle, carries a lively Representation of the Love of *Jesus Christ*, in the Recovery of lost Sinners. *Jesus Christ* came on Purpose from Heaven upon a like Errand, to seek and to save that which was lost. There are several Particulars in which this glorious Design of *Christ*, in seeking and saving lost Man, and the Care and Pains of Husbandmen in recovering their lost Cattle, meet, though there be many Particulars also in which they differ.

I. **W**E sometimes find, Cattle will break out of those very Fields where they have been bred,  
and

and where they want Nothing that is needful for them. Just thus, lost Man departed from God, brake out of that pleasant Enclosure where he was abundantly provided for, both as to Soul and Body; yet then he brake over the Hedge of the Command, and went astray, *Eccles. vii. 29. Lo this only have I found, that GOD made Man upright, but he sought out to himself many Inventions.* He was not satisfied with that blessed State GOD had put him into, but would be trying new Conclusions to the Ruin both of himself and his Posterity.

2. STRAYERS are evermore Sufferers for it; and what did Man get by departing from his GOD, but Ruin and Misery to Soul and Body? Will you have an Abreviate of his Sufferings and Losses? (the full Account none can give you) why? By straying from his GOD, he lost the Holiness of his Nature; (like a true Strayer) he is all dirty and miry, besmeared both in Soul and Body, with the odious Filthiness of Sin; he lost the Liberty of his Will to Good; a precious Jewel of inestimable Value: This is a real Misery incurr'd by the Fall, though some have so far lost their Understandings, as not to own it: He hath lost his GOD, his Soul, his Happiness, and his very Bowels of Compassion towards himself in this miserable State.

3. WHEN your Cattle are strayed, yea, though it be but one of the Flock or Herd, you leave all the rest, and go after that which is lost: So did *Jesus Christ*, who in the fore-cited Place, *Matt. xviii. 12.* compares Himself to such a Shepherd; He left Heaven itself, and all the blessed Angels there, to come into this World to seek lost Man. O the precious Esteem, and dear Love that *Christ* had



had to poor Man! How did his Bowels yearn towards us in our lost State! How did He pity us in our Misery! As if He had said, Poor Creatures, they have lost themselves, and are become a Prey to the Devil; I will seek after them, and save them.

BUT there are some Particulars in which *Christ's* seeking lost Souls, and your seeking lost Cattle differ.

1. YOUR Cattle sometimes find the Way Home themselves, and return to you of their own Accord; but lost Man never did, nor can do so; he was his own Destroyer, but can never be his own Saviour; it was possible for him not to have lost his God, but having once lost Him, he can never find Him again of himself. Alas! his Heart is bent to Backsliding, he hath no Will to return. Man's Recovery begins in GOD, not in himself.

2. YOUR Servants can find, and bring back your Cattle as well as you; but so cannot *Christ's* Servants. Ministers may discover, but cannot recover them; they daily seek, but cannot save them; lament them they can, but help them they cannot; entreat and beg them to return they can, but prevail with them they cannot. *Melancthon* thought when he began to preach, to persuade all; but old *Adam* was too hard for young *Melancthon*.

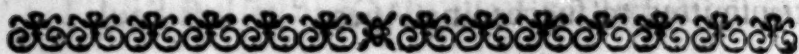
3. THOUGH you prize your Cattle, yet you will not venture your Life for the Recovery of them; you rather let them go than retain them with such an Hazard; but *Jesus Christ* not only ventured, but actually laid down his Life to recover, and save lost Man: He redeemed them at the

the Price of His own Blood; He is that good Shepherd that laid down His Life for the Sheep. O the surpassing Love of *Christ* to lost Souls!

REFLECTIONS.

1. LORD, I am a lost Creature, an undone Soul; and herein lies my Misery, that I have not only lost my God, but have no Heart to follow Him! Nay, I fly from *Christ*, who is come on purpose to seek and to save me; His Messengers are abroad seeking for such as I am, but I avoid them, or at least refuse to obey their Call and Persuasions to return. Ah, what a miserable State am I in! Every Step I go is a Step towards Hell; my Soul, with the Prodigal, is ready to perish in a strange Country! But I have no Mind with him to return home; wretched Soul, what will the End of this be? If God hath lost thee, the Devil hath found thee; he takes up all Strayers from God: Yea, Death, and Hell will shortly find thee, if *Christ* do not; and then thy Recovery will be impossible: Why sit I here perishing and dying! I am not yet as irrecoverably lost as the Damned are. O let me delay no longer, lest I be lost for ever.

2. O MY Soul! (may one say, that was lost, but is found,) for ever bless and admire the Love of *Jesus Christ*, who came from Heaven to seek and save, such a lost Soul as I was. LORD, how matchless is Thy Love! I was lost, and am found. I am found, and did not seek; nay, I am found by Him from whom I fled,



## C H A P. V.

Upon the Husbandman's Care for Posterity;

*Good Husbands labour for Posterity,  
To After-ages Saints must have an Eye.*

## O B S E R V A T I O N.

**C**AREFUL Husbandmen not only labour to supply their own Necessities while living, but to lay up Something for their Posterity when they are gone. None but bad Husbands and Spendthrifts are of the Mind with *Tiberius*, who having put all into such Confusion in the Empire, that it might be thought the World would end with him; yet pleased himself with this Apprehension, That he should be out of the Reach of it; and would often say, let Heaven and Earth mingle; if the World will but hold my Time, let it break when I am gone; But provident Men look beyond their own Time, and concern themselves in the Good or Evil of their Posterity.

## A P P L I C A T I O N.

WHAT careful Husbands do, with Respect to the Provisions they make for their Children, that  
all



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all prudent Christians do, with Respect to the Truths committed to them, and by them, to be transmitted to succeeding Ages.

IN the first Ages of the World, even 'till the Law was given, faithful Men were instead of Books and Records; they did by Tradition convey the Truths of GOD to Posterity; but since the sacred Truth hath been consigned to Writing, no such Tradition (except agreeing with that written Word) is to be received as authentick; but the Truths therein delivered to the Saints, are by open Confessions, and constant Sufferings, to be preserved and delivered from Age to Age. This was the whole Cloud of Witnesses, both ancient and modern, who have kept the Word of GOD's Patience, and would not accept their Lives, Liberties or Estates; no, nor the whole World in Exchange, for that invaluable Treasure; they have carefully practised *Solomon's Counsel, Prov. xxiii. 23. Buy the Truth, but sell it not*; they would not alienate that fair Inheritance for all the Inheritances on Earth. Upon the same Reasons that you refuse to part with your Estates, Christians also refuse to part with the Truths of GOD.

1. You will not waste or alienate your Inheritance, because it is of great Value in your Eyes; but much more precious are GOD's Truths to his People. *Luther* professed, he would not take the whole World for one Leaf of the Bible. Though some profane Persons may say with *Pilate*, What is Truth? Yet know, that any one Truth of the Gospel is more worthy than all the Inheritances upon Earth; they are the great Things of GOD's Law, and he that sells them for the greatest Things in this World, makes a Soul-undoing-Bargain.

2. You will not waste or part with your Inheritance, because you know your Posterity will be much wronged by it. They that baffle or drink away an Estate, drink the Tears of their sad Widows, and the Blood of their impoverished Children. The People of God consider, how much the Generations to come are concerned in the Conservation of the Truth of God for them: It cuts them to the Heart, to think, that their Children should be brought up to worship dumb Idols, and fall down before a wooden or breaden God. The very Birds and Beasts will expose their own Bodies to apparent Danger of Death to preserve their young. Religion doth much more intender the Hearts and Bowels than Nature doth.

3. You reckon it a foul Disgrace to sell your Estates, and become Bankrupts; it is a Word that hears ill among you: And a Christian accounts it the highest Reproach in the World, to be a Traytor to, or an Apostate from the Truths of God. When the primitive Saints were required to deliver up their Bibles, those that did so, were justly branded, under the odious Title of *Traditores*, or Deliverers.

4. You are so loth to part with your Estates, because you know it is hard recovering an Estate again, when once you have lost it. Christians also know, how difficult it will be for the People of God in Times to come to recover the Light of the Gospel again, if once it be extinguished. There is no Truth of God recovered out of Antichrist's Hands, without great Wrestlings and much Blood. The Church may call every Point of Reformed Doctrine and Discipline so recovered, her *Naphtalies*; for with great Wrestlings she hath wrestled for them.

5. To

5. To conclude, rather than you will part with your Estates, you will chuse to suffer many Wants and Hardships all your Lives; you will fare hard, and go bare, to preserve what you have for your Posterity: But the People of God have put themselves upon far greater Hardships than these to preserve Truth; they have chosen to suffer Reproaches, Poverty, Prisons, Death, and the most cruel Torments, rather than the Loss of God's Truth. All the Martyrologies will inform you what their Sufferings have been, to keep the Word of God's Patience; they have boldly told their Enemies, that they might pluck their Hearts out of their Bodies, but should never pluck the Truth out of their Hearts.

REFLECTIONS.

I. BASE, unbelieving Heart, may a cowardly Professor say! How have I shrunk from Truth when it hath been in Danger? I have rather chosen to leave it, than my Life, Liberty, or Estate, as a Prey to the Enemy. I have left Truth, and just it is, that the God of Truth should leave me. Cowardly Soul, that durst not make a Stand for Truth! Yea, bold and daring Soul, that wouldst rather venture to look a wrathful God, than an angry Man in the Face. I would not own and preserve the Truth, and the God of Truth will not own me, 2 Tim. ii. 12. *If we deny Him, He will deny us,*

2. LORD! unto me hast Thou committed the precious Treasure of Truth, may such as suffer for Truth say; and as I received it, so do I desire to deliver it to the Generations to come, that the People which are yet unborn may praise the LORD. God forbid I should ever part with such a fair Inheritance, and thereby beggar my own, and Thousands of Souls! Thou hast given me thy Truth,



and the World hates me, I well know that it is the Ground of the Quarrel; would I but throw Truth over the Walls, how soon would a Retreat be founded to all Persecutors? But, LORD! thy Truth is invaluable precious; what a vile Thing is my Blood, compared with the least of all thy Truths? Thou hast charged me not to sell it, and in thy Strength I resolve never to cut off that golden Line, whereby the Truths are entailed upon thy People, from Generation to Generation: My Friends may go, my Liberty go, my Blood may go, but as for thee, precious Truth, thou shalt never go.

3. How dear hath this Inheritance of Truth cost some, may you say? How little hath it cost us? We are entered into their Labours; we reap in Peace, what they sowed in Tears; yea in Blood. O the grievous Sufferings that they chose to endure, rather than to deprive us of such an Inheritance! Those noble Souls, heated with the Love of *Christ*, and Care for our Souls, made many bold and brave Adventures for it; and yet, at what a low Rate do we value what cost them so dear? Like young Heirs, that never knew the getting of an Estate, we spend it freely. LORD, help us thankfully and diligently to improve thy Truths, while we are in quiet Possession of them. Such Intervals of Peace and Rest, are usually of no long Continuance with thy People.



CHAP.

**C H A P. XI.**

**Upon the Husbandman's Care to prove and preserve his Deeds.**

*Deeds for your Lands you prove, and keep with Care;  
O that for Heaven you but as careful were.*

**OBSERVATION.**

**W**E generally find Men are not more careful in trying Gold, or in keeping it, than they are in examining their Deeds, and preserving them; these are virtually their whole Estate, and therefore it concerns them to be careful of them: If they suspect a Flaw in their Lease or Deed, they repair to the ablest Council, submit it to his Judgment, and query about all the supposable Dangers with him; if he tells them their Case is suspicious and hazardous, how much are they perplexed and troubled? they can neither eat, drink, or sleep in Peace, 'till they have a good Settlement; and willing they are to be at much Cost and Pains to obtain it.

**APPLICATION.**

**THESE** Cares and Fears, with which you are perplexed in such Cases, may give you a little Glimpse

Glimpse of those Troubles of Soul, with which the People of GOD are perplexed about their eternal Condition, which perhaps you have been hitherto unacquainted with. Your own Fears and Troubles, if ever you were engaged by a cunning and powerful Adversary in a Law-suit for your Estate, may give you a little Glimpse of spiritual Troubles; and indeed it is no more but a Glimpse of it: For, as the Loss of an earthly (though fair) Inheritance, is but a Trifle to the Loss of GOD, and the Soul; so you cannot but imagine, that the Cares, Fears, and Solicitudes of Souls about these Things, are much very much beyond yours. Let us compare the Cases, and see how they answer each other.

1. You have Evidences for your Estates, and by them you hold what you have in the World. They also have Evidences for their Estate in *Christ*, and Glory to come; they hold all by Virtue of their Inter-marriage with *Christ*; they come to be enstated in that glorious Inheritance, contained in the Covenant of Grace. You have their Tenure in that Scripture, *1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. All is yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.* Faith unites them to Him, and after they believe, they are sealed by the Spirit of Promise, *Eph. i. 13.* They can lay Claim to no Promise upon any other Ground; this is their Title to all that they own as theirs.

2. It often falls out, that after the executing of Deeds or Leases, an Adversary finds some dubious Clause in them, and thereupon commences a Suit of Law with you. Thus it frequently falls out with the People of GOD, who after their believing, have Doubts and Scruples raised in them about their Title. Nothing is more common, than for the Devil and their own Unbelief to start Controversies,

and



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and raise strong Objections against their Interest in *Christ*. These are cunning and potent Adversaries, and maintain long Debates, and reason cunningly and sophistically, always alledging, that their Title is worth Nothing.

3. ALL the while that a Suit in Law is depending about your Title, you have but little Comfort or Benefit from your Estate; you cannot look upon it as your own, nor lay out Monies in Building or Dressing, for Fear you should lose all at last. Just thus stands the Case with doubting Christians, they have little Comfort from the most comfortable Promises, or little Benefit from the sweetest Duties and Ordinances; they put off their own Comforts, and say, If we were sure, that all this were ours, we could then rejoice in them; but alas! our Title is dubious; *Christ* is a precious *Christ*, the Promises are comfortable Things, but what if they be none of ours? Ah! how little doth the doubting Christian make of his large and rich Inheritance?

4. You dare not trust your own Judgments in such Cases, but state your Case to such as are learned in the Laws; and are willing to get the ablest Counsel you can to advise you: So are poor doubting Christians, they carry their Cases from Christian to Christian, and from Minister to Minister, with such Requests as these: Pray tell me, what do you think of my Condition? deal plainly and faithfully with me; these be my Grounds of Doubting, and these my Grounds of Hope. O hide Nothing from me! And if they all agree that their Case is good, yet they cannot be satisfied till God say so too, and confirm the Word of his Servants; and therefore they carry the Case often before Him, in such Words as these, *Psal.* cxxxix. 23, 24. Search me,

*me, O GOD, and know my Heart; try me, and know my Thoughts, and see if there be any Way of Wickedness in me.*

5. You have little Quiet in your Spirits, 'till the Case be resolved, you cannot sleep in the Night, because these troubled Thoughts are ever returning upon you. What if I should be turned out of all at last? So it is with these: Their Eyes are held waking in the Night, by Reason of the Troubles of their Hearts. Such Fears as these are frequently returning: What if I should be found a Self-deceiver at last? How can this, or that consist with Grace? Their Meat and Drink doth them little Good; their Bodies are often macerated by the Trouble of their Souls.

*Lastly,* WHEN your Title is cleared, your Hearts are eased; yea, not only eased, but over-joyed; though not in that Degree, nor with the same Kind of Joy, that the Hearts of Christians are overflowed, when the LORD speaks Peace to their Souls. O welcome the sweet Morning-Light, after a tedious Night of Darkeness; now they can eat their Bread with Comfort, and drink their Wine (yea if it be but Water) with a merry Heart.

## REFLECTIONS.

1. O HOW hath my Spirit been tossed and hurried; may the careless Soul say, with Troubles and Clamours about my Estate! But as for those Soul-perplexing Cases, that Christians speak of, I understand but little of them. I never called my everlasting State in Question, nor brake an Hour's Sleep upon such an Account. Ah, my careless Soul! Little hast thou regarded how Matters stand in Reference to Eternity! I have strongly conceited,

but

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but never thoroughly examined the Validity of my Title to *Christ* and his Promises; nor am I able to tell, if my own Conscience should demand, whereupon my Claim is grounded!

O MY Soul! why art thou so unwilling to examine how Matters stand betwixt God and thee? Art thou afraid to look into thy Condition? Least thou shouldst lose thy Peace; or rather thy Security. To what Purpose will it be to shut thine Eyes against the Light of Conviction, unless thou couldst also find out a Way to prevent thy Condemnation? Thou seest others, how attentively they wait under the Word, for any Thing that may speak to their Conditions. Doubtless thou hast heard how frequently and seriously they have stated their Conditions, and opened their Cases to the Ministers of *Christ*! But thou, O my Soul! hast no such Cases to put, no Doubts to be resolved; thou wilt leave all to the Decision of the great Day, and not trouble thyself about it now. Well, God will decide it, but little to thy Comfort.

2. I HAVE heard how some have been perplexed by litigious Adversaries, may others say, but I believe none have been so tossed with Fears, and Doubts, as I have been about the State of my Soul. LORD, what shall I do? I have often carried my Doubts and Scruples to thine Ordinances, waiting for Satisfaction to be spoken there. I have carried them to those I have judged skilful and faithful, begging their Resolution and Help, but Nothing will stick. Still my Fears are renewed. O my God, do Thou decide my Case! Tell me how the Case stands betwixt Thee and me; my Days consume in Trouble, I can neither do, or enjoy any Good, whilst Things are thus with me; all my earthly Enjoyments are dry and uncomfortable; yea, which  
is



is much worse, all my Duties and thine Ordinances prove so too, by Reason of the Troubles of my Heart ! I am no Ornament to my Profession, nay, I am a Discouragement and Stumbling-block to others ? I will hearken and hear what GOD the LORD will speak, O that it might be Peace ! If Thou do not speak it, none can ; and when Thou dost, keep thy Servant from returning to Folly, lest I make fresh Work for an accusing Conscience, and give new Matter to the Adversary of my Soul !

2. BUT thou (my Soul) enjoyest a double Mercy from thy bountiful GOD, who hath not only given thee a sound Title, but also the clear Evidence and Knowledge thereof. I am gathering and daily feeding upon the full ripe Fruits of Assurance, whilst many of my poor Brethren drink their own Tears, and have their Teeth broken with Gravel-stones. LORD, Thou hast set my Soul upon her high Places, but let me not exalt myself, because Thou hast exalted me ; nor grow wanton because I walk at Liberty, lest for the Abuse of such precious Liberty, Thou clap my old Chains upon me, and shut up my Soul again in Prison.

6 JY 64



# DISCOURSE

OF THE

## CAUSES and REMEDIES

## MENTAL ERRORS.



DISCOURSE



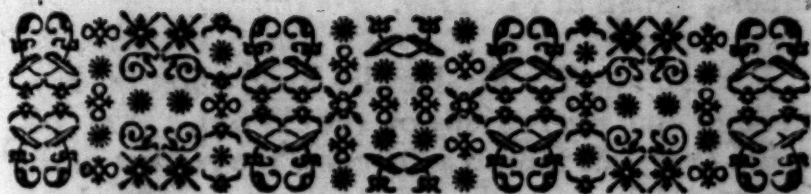
CAUSES AND

MENTAL ERRORS.

IN PRODUCTION.

WINDING by sad Experience what I  
 before justly feared, that every would  
 be apt to spring up with Liberty (though  
 the restraint of just Liberty, being a  
 practical Error in Reason, can never be  
 the Cause of Mental Errors in the Subject); I  
 judged it necessary at this Season to give a Succinct  
 account of the Rise, Causes, and Remedies of  
 several



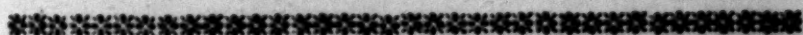


T H E


CAUSES and CURES

O F

MENTAL ERRORS.



I N T R O D U C T I O N.


**F**INDING by sad Experience what I  
 before justly feared, that *Errors* would  
 be apt to spring up with Liberty (though  
 the restraint of just Liberty, being a  
 practical Error in Rulers, can never be  
 the Cure of *Mental Errors* in the Subjects;) I  
 judged it necessary at this Season to give a Succinct  
 account of the Rise, Causes, and Remedies of  
several

several Mistakes and Errors, under which even the Reformed Churches among us, as well as others, groan at this Day.

I WILL not stay my Reader long upon the Etymology and Derivations of the Word. Yet because they cast some Light upon the Nature of the Thing we enquire after, it will not be lost Labour to observe that this Word *Error* derives it self from three Roots in the *Hebrew* Language.

(1.) THE first Word Primitively signifies to deviate or decline from the true Scope or Path, as unskillful Marks-men, or ignorant and inadvertent Travellers do. The least Variation or Turning aside from the true Rule and Line, though it be but an Hair's Breadth, presently becomes an Error. We read, *Judg. xx. 16.* of 700 *Benjamites, who could every one sling Stones at an Hair's Breadth, and not miss.* This by a Metaphor is applied to the Mind or Judgment of Man; and denotes the Warpings thereof from the Straight, Perfect, Divine Law or Rule, and is usually translated by the Word *Sin*.

(2.) It is derived from another Word also, which signifies to Wander in variable and uncertain Motions: You find it in the Title of the 7th *Psalms*, *Shiggaion*, of *David*, a wandering Song, or a Song of variable Notes and Tunes, higher and lower, sharper and flatter. In both the former Derivations it seems to note simple Error through meer Weakness and Ignorance. But then

(3.) IN its Derivation from a third Root, it signifies not only to Err, but to cause others to Err also; and so signifies a Seducer, or one that is active in leading others into a wrong Way; and

is applied in that Sense to the *Prophets* in *Israel*, who seduced the People, *Ezek. xiii. 10.* The *Greek Verb* *πλανάω* takes in both these Senses, both to go astray, and to lead others astray with us. Hence is the Word *πλανήτης*, *Planets* or wandering Stars; the Title given by the Apostle *Jude ver. 13.* to the false Teachers and Seducers of his Time.

AN Error then is any Departure or Deviation in our Judgment from the perfect Rule of the Divine Law: And to this all Men by Nature are not only liable, but inclinable. Indeed Man by Nature can do Nothing else but Err, *Psalms lvi. 3.* *he goeth astray as soon as Born*; makes not one true Step 'till renewed by Grace, and many false ones after his Renovation. The Life of the holiest Man is a Book with many Errata's; but the whole Edition of a wicked Man's Life is but one continued Error; he that thinks he cannot err, manifestly errs in so thinking. The *Pope's* supposed and pretended Infallibility hath made him the great Deceiver of the World. A good Man may err, but is willing to know his Error, and will not obstinately maintain it, when he once plainly discerns it.

ERROR and Heresy among other Things differ in this; Heresy is accompanied with Pertinacy; and therefore the Heretick is *αὐτοκατακρίσιμος*, self-condemned; his own Conscience condemns him, whilst Men labour in vain to convince him. He doth not formally and in Terms condemn himself, but he doth so equivalently, whilst he continues to own and maintain Doctrines and Opinions which he finds himself unable to defend against the Evidence of Truth. Human Frailty may



lead a Man into the first, but devilish Pride fixes him in the last.

BECAUSE there are many general and very useful Observations about Errors, which will not so conveniently come under the Laws of that Method which governs the main Part of this Discourse, viz. the *Causes and Cures of Error*: I have therefore sorted them by themselves, and premised them to the following Part in Seventeen Observations next ensuing.

### OBSERVATION I.

*Truth is the proper Object, the natural and pleasant Food of the Understanding.*

NOTHING is more natural to Man, than a Desire to know: Knowledge never cloyes the Mind, as Food doth the natural Appetite; but as the one increaseth, the other is proportionably sharpened. The Minds of all (that are not wholly immersed in Sensuality) spend their Strength in the laborious Search and Pursuit of Truth: Sometimes climbing up from the Effects to the Causes, and then descending again from the Causes to the Effects; and all to discover Truth. Fervent Prayer, sedulous Study, fixed Meditations, are the Labours of inquisitive Souls after Truth. All the Objections and Counter-arguments the Mind meets in its Way, are but the Pauses and Hesitations of a Soul not able to determine whether Truth lies upon this Side or upon that.

ANSWERABLE to the Sharpness of the Mind's Appetite, is the fine Edge of Pleasure and Delight it feels in the Discovery of Truth. When it hath tortured itself upon knotty Problems, and at last dis-

discovered the Truth it sought for; with what Joy doth the Soul dilate itself, and run (as it were with open Arms) to clasp and welcome it?

THE Understanding of Man at first was perspicacious and clear, all Truths lay obvious in their comely Order and ravishing Beauty before it: GOD made Man upright: This Rectitude of his Mind consisted in Light and Knowledge, as appears by the prescribed Method of his Recovery, Col. iii. 10. *Renewed in Knowledge, after the Image of Him that created him.* Truth in the Mind, or the Mind's Union with Truth, being Part of the Divine Image in Man, discovers to us the Sin and Mischief of Error, which is a defacing (so far as it prevails) of the Image of GOD.

No sooner was Man created, but by the Exercise of Knowledge he soon discovered GOD's Image in him; and by his Ambition after more, lost what he had. So that now there is an Haze or Cloud spread over Truth by Ignorance and Error.

## OBSERVATION II.

*Of Knowledge there are divers Sorts; some is Human, and some Divine, some speculative, and some practical.*

BUT of all Knowledge none like that Divine and supernatural Knowledge of Saving-Truths revealed by Christ in the Scriptures; from whence arise the different Degrees both of the Sinsfulness and Danger of Errors; those Errors being always the worst which are committed against the most important Truths revealed in the Gospel.

THESE

THESE Truths lie infolded either in the plain Words, or evident and necessary Consequences from the Words of the Holy Scriptures; Scripture-Consequences are of great Use for the Refutation of Errors; it was by Scripture-Consequence that *Christ* successfully proved the Resurrection against the *Sadduces*, Matt. xii.

SOME think that Reason, or natural Light is abundantly sufficient for the Direction of Life; but certainly Nothing is more necessary to us for that End, than the Written Word; for tho' the Remains of natural Light have their Place and Use in directing us about natural and earthly Things, 1 Cor. ii. 14. *The natural Man receiveth not the Things of God, &c.* Eph. v. 8. *Once were ye Darknefs, now are ye Light in the LORD, i. e.* by a Beam of heavenly Light shining from the Spirit of *Christ*, through the Written Word, into your Minds or Understandings.

It is the written Word which shines upon the Path of our Duty, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament jointly make the solid Foundation of a Christian's Faith. Hence Eph. ii. 20. we are said to be built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets. We are bound therefore to honour Old Testament Scriptures as well as New, they being Part of the Divine Canon, and must not scruple to admit them as authentick Proofs, for the Confirmation of Truths, and Refutation of Errors. *Christ* referred the People to them, *John* v. 39. and *Paul* preached and disputed from them, *Acts* xxvi. 22.



OBSERVATION III.

*Unto the Attainment of Divine Knowledge out of the Scriptures, some Things are naturally, yet less principally requisite; and something absolutely and principally necessary.*

THE natural Qualifications desirable in the Mind, are Clearness of Apprehension, Solidity of Judgment, and Fidelity of Retention. These are desirable Requisites to make the Understanding susceptible of Knowledge; but the Irradiation of the Mind by the Spirit of God is principally necessary, *John xvi. 13. He shall guide you into all Truth: The clearest and most comfortable Light He giveth to Men, is in the Way of Sanctification, called the Teachings of the Anointing, 1 John ii. 27.*

WHEN this spiritual sanctifying Light shines upon a Mind qualified with the three fore-mentioned Requisites, that Mind excels others in the Riches of Knowledge. And yet the Teachings of the Spirit in the Way of Sanctification, very much supply the Defects of the fore-mentioned Qualifications. Whence two Things are highly remarkable:

I. THAT Men of great Abilities of Nature, clear Apprehensions in natural Things, strong Judgments, and tenacious Memories, not only frequently fall into gross Errors and damnable Heresies themselves, but become Heresiarchs, or Heads of erroneous Factions, drawing Multitudes into the same Sin and Misery with themselves; as *Arius, Socinus, Bellarmin*, and Multitudes of others have done.

AND

AND secondly, It is no less remarkable, that Men of weaker Parts, but Babes in Comparison, thro' the Sanctification and Direction of the Spirit, for which they have humbly waited in Prayer, have not only been directed and guided by Him into the Truth, but so confirmed and fixed therein, that they have been kept sound in their Judgments in Times of abounding Errors, and firm in their Adherence to it in Days of fiercest Persecution.

#### OBSERVATION IV.

*Among the manifold Impediments to the obtaining true Knowledge, and settling the Mind in the Truth and Faith of the Gospel, these three are of special Consideration, viz. Ignorance, Curiosity, and Error.*

IGNORANCE slights it, or despairs of attaining it. Truth falls into Contempt among the Ignorant, from Sluggishness and Apprehension of the Difficulties that lie in the Way to it, *Prov. xxiv. 7. Wisdom is too high for a Fool.*

CURIOSITY runs beside or beyond it. This Pride and Wantonness of the Mind puffs it up with a vain Conceit, that it is not only able to penetrate the deepest Mysteries revealed in the Scripture, but even unrevealed Secrets also, *Col. ii. 18. Intruding into those Things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly Mind.* But

ERROR militates directly against it, contradicts and opposeth Truth, especially when an Error is maintained by Pride against inward Convictions, or Means of better Information. It is bad to maintain an Error for Want of Light; but abundantly

dantly worse to maintain it against Light. This is such an Affront to God, as He usually punishes with penal Ignorance, and gives them up to a Spirit of Error.

### OBSERVATION V.

*Error is binding upon the Conscience, as well as Truth; and altogether as much, and sometimes more influential upon the Affections and Passions, as Truth is.*

FOR it presents not itself to the Soul in its own Name, as *Error*; but in the Name and Dress of *Truth*; and under that Notion binds the Conscience, and vigorously influences the Passions and Affections; and then being more indulgent to Lust than Truth is, it is for that so much the more embraced by the deceived Soul. The Heat that Error puts the Soul into, differs from a religious Zeal, as a feverish doth from a natural Heat, which is not indeed so benign and agreeable, but much more fervent and scorching. A Mind under the Power of Error is restless and impatient to propagate its Errors, and these Heats prey upon and eat up the vital Spirits and Power of Religion.

### OBSERVATION VI.

*It is exceeding difficult to get out Error, when once it is imbibed, and hath rooted itself by an open Profession.*

ERRORS, like some Sorts of Weeds, having once seeded in a Field or Garden, it is scarce possible to subdue and destroy them; especially if they be hereditary Errors, or have grown up with us from our



our Youth; à teneris assuescere multum est, saith *Seneca*; it is a great Advantage to Truth or Error, to have an early and long Possession of the Mind. The *Pharisees* held many erroneous Opinions about the *Law*, as appears by the correlative *Commentaries* upon it, refuted by *Christ*, *Mat.* v. but did he root them out of their Heads and Hearts thereby? No, no; they sooner rid him out of the World. The *Sadducees* held a most dangerous Error about the *Resurrection*; *Christ* disputed with them to the Admiration of others; and proved it clearly against them; and yet we find the Error remaining long after *Christ's* Death, *2 Tim.* ii. 18. The *Apostles* themselves had their Minds tinged with this Error, That *Christ* should be outwardly Great and Magnificent in the World, and raise his Followers to great Honours and Preferments amongst Men: *Christ* plainly told them it was their Mistake; for the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; yet this did not rid their Minds of the Error: it stuck fast in them, even till his Ascension to Heaven. O how hard it is to clear the Heart of a good Man once leavened with Error! and how much more hard to separate it from a wicked Man.

## OBSERVATION VII.

*Men are not so circumspect and jealous of the Corruption of their Minds by Errors, as they are of their Bodies in Times of Contagion; or of their Lives with respect to gross Immoralities.*

¶ SPIRITUAL Dangers affect us less than corporal; and intellectual Evils less than moral. Whether this be the Effect of Hypocrisy, the Errors of the Mind being more secret and invisible than those of the Conversation;

OR whether it be the Effect of Ignorance, that Men think there is less Sin and Danger in the one than in the other; not considering, that an Apoplexy seizing the Head, is every Way as mortal, as a Sword piercing the Body: The Apostle in 2 Pet. ii. 1. calls them *αἰσχροὶ ἀπολείας*, damnable Heresies, or Heresies of Destruction. An Error in the Mind may be as destructive to the Soul, as an Error of Immorality or Profaneness in the Life.

### OBSERVATION VIII.

*It is a great Judgment of God, to be given over to an erroneous Mind.*

FOR the Understanding being the leading Faculty, as that guides, the other Powers and Affections of the Soul follow, as Horses in a Team follow the Fore-horse. Now how sad and dangerous a Thing is this, for Satan to ride the Fore-horse, and guide that, that is to guide the Life of Man? That is a dreadful, judicial Stroke of God, which we read of Rom. i. 26. *ταπεινωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ Θεὸς ἐκ πᾶσης ἀντιλήσεως*; GOD by a penal Tradition suffered them to run into the Dregs of Immorality, and Pollutions of Life; and that because they abused their Light, and became vain in their Imaginations, ver. 21.

WILD Whimsies and Fancies in the Head, usually mislead Men into the Mire of Profaneness, and then it is commonly observed GOD sets some visible Mark of his Displeasure upon them; especially the *Heresiarchs*, or Ring-leaders in Error. Nestorius's Tongue was consumed by Worms. Cerinthus's Brains knocked out by the Fall of an House. It were easy to instance in Multitudes of

others, whom the visible Hand of God had marked for a Warning to others; but usually the Errors of the Mind are followed by a Consumption and Decay of Religion in the Soul. If Grace be in the Heart, where Error sways its Sceptre in the Head, yet usually there it languishes and withers. They may mistake their Dropsy for Growth and Flourishing, and think themselves to be more spiritual, because more airy and notional; but if Men would judge themselves impartially, they will certainly find that the Seeds of Grace thrive not in the Heart, when shaded and over-dropt by an erroneous Head.

### OBSERVATION IX.

*It is a pernicious Evil, to advance a mere Opinion into the Place of an Article of Faith; and to lay as great a Stress upon it, as they ought to do upon the most clear and fundamental Point.*

OPINION (as one truly saith) is but Reason's Projector, and the Spy of Truth: It makes in its fullest Discovery no more than the Dawning and Twilight of Knowledge; and yet I know not how it comes to pass, but so it is, that this Idol of the Mind holds such a Sway and Empire over all we hold. Matters of mere Opinion, are every where cried up by some, for Mathematical Demonstration, and Articles of Faith, written with a Sun-beam; worshipping the Fancies and Creatures of their own Minds, more than God; and putting more Trust in their ill-founded Opinions, than in the sure Word of Prophecy. Much like that Humorist that would not trust Day-light, but kept his Candle still burning by him; because (said he) this is not as subject to Eclipses, as the Sun is.

AND



AND what more frequent, when Controversies grow fervent, than for those that maintain the Error to boast every silly Argument to be a Demonstration; to upbraid and pity the Blindness and Dulness of their Opposers, as Men that shut their Eyes against Sun-beams; yea, sometimes to draw their Censures through the very Hearts of their Opposers, and to insinuate that they must needs hold the Truths of God in Unrighteousness, sin against their Knowledge, and that Nothing keeps them from coming over to them, but Pride, Shame, or some worldly Interest? What a complicated Evil is here! A proud exalting of our own Opinions, an immodest imposing on the Minds of others more clear and sound than our own, and a dangerous Usurpation of God's Prerogative in judging the Hearts and Ends of our Brethren.

OBSERVATION X.

*Error being conscious to itself of its own Weakness, and the strong Assaults that will be made upon it, evermore labours to defend and secure itself under the Wings of Antiquity, Reason, or Scripture.*

ANTIQUITY is a venerable Word, but ill used, when made a Cloak for Error. Truth must needs be elder than Error, as the Rule must necessarily be, before the Aberration from it. The grey Hairs of Opinions are then only Beauty, and a Crown, when found in the Way of Righteousness. Copper (saith learned *Dumoulin*) will never become Gold by Age. A Lye will be a Lye, let it be never so ancient. We dispute not by Years, but by Reasons drawn from Scripture. That which is now called an ancient Opinion, if it be not a true Opinion, was once but a new

Error. When you can tell us how many Years are required to turn an Error into Truth, then we will give more Heed to Antiquity, when pressed by Error, than we now think due to it.

If Antiquity will not do, Reason shall be pressed to serve Error's Turn at a dead Lift; and indeed the Pencil of Reason can lay curious Colours upon rotten Timber, and varnish over erroneous Principles with fair and plausible Pretences. What expert Artists have the *Socinians* proved themselves in this Matter? But because Men are bound to submit human Authority and Reason to divine Revelation, both must give Way and strike Sail to the written Word.

HENCE it comes to pass, that the great Patrons and Factors for Error, do above all Things labour to gain Countenance from the written Word; and to this End, they manifestly wrest the Scriptures to make them subervient to their Opinions; not impartially studying the Scriptures first, and forming their Opinions according to them; but they bring their erroneous Opinions to the Scriptures, and then, with all imaginable Art and Sophistry, wire-draw and force the Scriptures to countenance and legitimate their Opinions.

**OBSER-**

OBSERVATION XL.

GOD in all Ages in his tender Care for his Churches and Truths, hath still qualified and excited his Servants for the Defence of his precious Truths, against the Errors and Heresies that have successively assaulted them.

As Providence is observed in every Climate and Island of the World to have provided Antidotes against the poisonous Plants and Animals of the Country; and the one is never far from the other: So is the Care of his Providence much more conspicuous in the Case now before us. When, or wheresoever venomous Errors and deadly Heresies arise, He hath his Servants at Hand with Antidotes against them.

WHEN *Arrius*, that deadly Enemy to the Deity of *Christ*, struck at the very Heart of our Religion, Faith, and Comfort; a Man of subtle Parts, and blameless Life, which made his Heresy much the more spreading; the LORD had his well-furnished *Athanasius* in Readiness to resist and confound him. And as He had his *Athanasius* to defend the Deity of *Christ*; so He wanted not his *Basil* to defend the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit against *Macedonius*.

So from the Beginning and first Rise of Popery, that Center and Sink of Errors, we have a large Catalogue of the learned and famous Witnesses, which in all Ages have faithfully opposed it; and when, notwithstanding all, it had over-run *Europe* like a rapid Torrent; and *Germany* was brought to that Pass, that if the Pope had but commanded it, they would have eaten Grass or Hay *more pecudum*; then did the LORD bring forth invincible *Luther*,



and with him a Troop of learned Champions, into the Field against him; since which Time the Cause of Popery is become desperate.

THUS the Care of Providence in all Ages hath been as much displayed in protecting the Church against the Dangers that arose from false Brethren within it, as from avowed persecuting Enemies without it; and had it not been so, the rank Weeds of Heresies and Errors had long since overtopped and choked the Corn, and made the Church a barren Field.

## OBSERVATION XII.

*The Want of a modest Suspicion, and just Reflection, gives both Confidence and Growth to erroneous Opinions.*

IF Matters of mere Opinion were kept in their proper Place, under the careful Guard of Suspicion, they would not make that Buffle and Confusion in the Churches, they have done, and do at this Day.

IT is confessed, that all Truths are not Matters of mere Opinion; neither are all Opinion of equal Weight: And yet it is as true, that Matters of Opinion ought carefully to be sorted from Matters of Faith, and to be kept in their own Rank, whilst Matters of Faith, clearly revealed, are to stand upon their sure and firm Basis. The former, *viz.* Matters of mere Opinion, we are so to hold, as upon clear Light to be ready to part with them. The other, *viz.* Matters of Faith, we are to hold with Resolutions to live and die by them.

WHAT is Opinion, but the Wavering of the Understanding betwixt probable Arguments, for  
and

and against a Point of Doctrine? In such Cases there should be a due Allowance of other Mens Opinions to them; and why not, whilst they offer as fair for the Truth as we? And haply their Parts, Helps, and Industries, are not inferior to ours; it may be beyond them, and we may discern in them as much Tenderness of Conscience, and Fear of Sin, as in ourselves. In this Case, a little more modest Suspicion in our Opinions, would do the Church a great deal of Right; and that which should prevail with all modest Persons to exercise it, is the just Reflection they may make upon their own former confident Mistakes.

### OBSERVATION XIII.

*There is a remarkable Involution or Conca'enation of Errors, one linking in, and drawing another after it.*

AMONGST all erroneous Sects, there is still some *πρωτον ψευδος*, some *Helena*, for whose Sake the War against Truth is commenced; and the other lesser Errors are pressed for the Sake and Service of this leading darling Error. As we see the whole Troop of Indulgences, Bulls, Masses, Pilgrimages, Purgatory, with Multitudes more, flow from, and are pressed into the Service of the Pope's Supremacy and Infallibility. So in other Sects, Men are forced to entertain many other Errors, which in themselves considered, they have no great Kindness for; but they are necessitated to entertain them in Defence of that great, leading, darling Opinion they first espoused.

## OBSERVATION XIV.

*Errors abound most, and spring fastest in the Times of the Church's Peace, Liberty, and outward Prosperity, under indulgent Rulers.*

CHRISTIAN benevolent Rulers are choice Mercies and Blessings to the Church. Such as rule over Men in the Fear of GOD, are to the Church, as well as civil State, *like the Light of the Morning, when the Sun ariseth, even a Morning without Clouds, as the tender Grass springing out of the Earth by clear Shining after Rain, 2 Sam. xxiii. 4.*

BUT this, as well as other Mercies, is liable to Abuse; and under the Influences of indulgent Governors, Error as well as Truth springs up, flowers, and seeds. Persecution gives Check to the Wantonness of Mens Opinions, and finds them other Work to do. Caterpillars and Locusts are swept away by the bitter East-Winds, but swarm in Halcyon Days, and fall upon every green Thing. So that the Church rides in this Respect more safely in the stormy Sea, than in the calm Harbour. Peace and Prosperity is apt to cast its Watchmen into a Sleep, and whilst they sleep, the envious one soweth Tares.

THE Abuse of such an excellent Mercy provokes the LORD to cut it short, and cause the Clouds to gather again after the Rain. We have found it so once and again (alas! that I must say again) in this wanton and foolish Nation. Professors could live quietly together, converse, fast, and pray in a Christian Manner together, under common Calamities and Dangers; Differences in Opinion were suspended by Consent: But no sooner do we feel



a warm Sun-blast of Liberty and Peace, but it revives and heats our dividing Lusts and Corruptions, instead of our Graces. The Sheep of *Christ* fight with each other, though their furious Pushing one at another is known to presage a Change of Weather.

OBSERVATION XV.

*Nothing gives more Countenance and Increase to Error, than a weak and feeble Defence of the Truth against it.*

THE Strength of Error lieth much in the Weakness of the Advocates and Defendants of Truth. Every Friend of Truth is not fit to make a Champion for it. Many love it, and pray for it, that cannot defend and dispute for it. "I can die for the Truth, (said the Martyr) but I cannot dispute for it." *Zuinglius* blamed *Caroloſtadius* for undertaking the Controversy of that Age, because (said he) *non habuit satis humerorum; his Shoulders were too weak for the Burden.*

It can be said of few, as *Cicero* speaks of one, *Nullam unquam in disputationibus rem defendit, quam non probavit; nullum oppugnavit, quem non everterit:* He undertook no Cause in Disputation, which he could not defend; he opposed no Adversary, but could overthrow him. He is a rare and happy Disputant, who can clear and carry every Point of Truth, of which he undertakes the Defence. It were happy for the Church, if the Abilities and Prudence of all her Friends were equal to their Love and Zeal, Every Foil, every weak or impertinent Answer of a Friend to Truth is quickly turned into a Weapon to wound it the deeper.

OBSER-

## OBSERVATION XVI.

*Errors of Judgment are not cured by Compulsion and external Force, but by rational Conviction, and proper spiritual Remedies.*

BODILY Sufferings rather spread than cure intellectual Errors. I deny not but fundamental Heresies, breaking forth into open Blasphemies against God, and Seditions in the civil State, ought to be restrained. It is no Way fit that Men should be permitted to go up and down the World with Plague-sores running upon them: Nor do I understand why Men should be more cautious to preserve their Bodies than their Souls. But I speak here of such Errors as may consist with the Foundations of the Christian Faith, and are not destructive to civil Government. They take the ready Way to spread and perpetuate them, that think to root them out of the World by external Force and Violence. The Wind never causes an Earthquake, 'till it be pent in, and restrained from Motion.

We never find, nor can imagine, that those Church or State Exorcists should ever be able to effect their End, who think to confine all the Spirits of Error within the Circle of a severe Uniformity. Fires, Prisons, Pillories, Stigmatizings, Mutilations, Whippings, Banishments, are the Popish Topicks to confute Errors. It is highly remarkable, that the World long ago consented, for the avoiding of dissenting Judgment, to enslave themselves and their Posterity to the most fatal and destructive Heresy that ever it groaned under.

IT is a rational and proper Observation long since made by *Lactantius*, *Quis mihi imponat necessitatem credendi*

*credendi, quod nolum, vel non credendi, quod velim?* Who can force me to believe what I will not, or not to believe what I will? The rational and gentle Spirit of the Gospel is the only proper and effectual Method to cure the Diseases of the Mind.

## OBSERVATION XVII.

*If ever Errors be cured, and the Peace and Unity of the Church established, Men must be convinced of, and acquainted with the Occasions and Causes both within and without themselves, from whence their Errors proceed; and must both know and apply the proper Rules and Remedies for the Prevention or Cure of them.*

THERE is much Difference betwixt an Occasion, and a proper Cause; these two are heedfully to be distinguished. Critical and exact Historians, as *Polybius* and *Tacitus*, distinguish betwixt the *æxx*, and the *αἰτία*, the beginning Occasions, and the real Causes of a War; and so we ought in this Case of Errors. The most excellent and innocent Things in the World, such as the Scriptures, the Liberty of Christians, the Tranquility and Peace of the Church, may, by the Subtlety of *Satan* working in Conjunction with the Corruptions of Mens Hearts, become the Occasions, but can never be the proper Causes of Errors.

ACCORDINGLY having made the seventeen Remarks upon the Nature and Growth of Errors, (which cannot so well be brought within the following Rules of Method) I shall in the next Place proceed in the Discovery both of the mere Occasion, as also of the proper culpable Causes of Errors, together with the proper Preventives and most



most effectual Remedies placed together in the following Order.

THE Holy GOD, who is a GOD of Truth, and hateth Errors, the GOD of Order, and hates Confusions and Schisms in the Church, is yet pleased to permit Errors and Heresies to arise, without whose Permission they could never spring. And this He doth for the Trial of his Peoples Faith and Constancy, and for a spiritual Punishment upon some Men for the Abuse of his known Truths; and by the Permission of those Evils He advanceth his own Glory, and the Good of his Church and People.

SATAN's Design in Errors is to cloud and darken GOD's Name and precious Truths; to destroy the Beauty, Strength, and Order of the Church. But GOD's Ends in permitting and sending Errors, are, (1.) To punish Men for their Abuse of Light. (2.) To prove and try the Sincerity and Constancy of our Hearts, *Deut. xiii. 1, 3. 1 Cor. xi. 19.* And lastly, By these Things the Saints are awakened to a more diligent Search of the Scriptures, which are the more critically read and examined upon the Trial of the Spirits and Doctrines by them.

BUT though Heresies and Errors must (for the Reasons assigned) break forth into the World, and GOD will turn them eventually to his own Glory; yet it is a dreadful Judgment to be delivered over to a Spirit of Error, to be the Authors and Abettors of them; this is a judicial Stroke of GOD: And as ever we hope to escape, and stand clear out of the Way of it, let us carefully shun these three following Causes and Provocations thereof.

I. WANT

1. **WANT** of Love to the Truth, which God hath made to shine *about* us in the Means, or *into* us by actual Illumination under the Means of Knowledge, 2 *Thef.* ii. 10, 11. *Because they received not the Love of the Truth, God gave them up to strong Delusions.* They are justly plagued with Error that slight Truth. False Doctrines are fit Plagues for false Hearts.

2. **BEWARE** of Pride and Wantonness of Mind. It is not so much the Weakness as the Wantonness of the Mind, which provokes God to inflict this Judgment. None likelier to make Seducers, than Boasters, *Jude* 16. *Arrius* gloried that God had revealed some Things to him, which were hidden from the Apostles themselves. *Simon Magus* boasted himself to be the mighty Power of God.

3. **BEWARE** you neglect not Prayer, to be kept sound in your Judgments, and guided by the Spirit into all Truth, *Psalms* cxix. 10. *With my whole Heart have I sought Thee: O let me not wander (or err) from thy Commandments.* This do, and you are safe from such a judicial Tradition.

WE shall next speak of the Causes of Error found in the evil Dispositions of Men, which prepare and incline them to receive erroneous Opinions, and even catch at the Occasions and least Sparkles of Temptation, as dry Tinder; and amongst these is found,

(I.) A **PERVERSE** wrangling Humour at the pretended *Obscurity* of the Scriptures. The *Romish* Party snatch at this Occasion, and make it the proper Cause, when indeed it is but a pick'd Occasion of the Errors and Mistakes among Men. They tell us the Scriptures are so difficult, obscure, and

perplexed, that if private Men will trust to them as their only Guide, they will inevitably run into Errors, and their only Relief is to give up their Souls to the Conduct of their Church; whereas indeed the true Cause of Error is not so much in the Obscurity of the Word, as in the Corruption of the Mind.

WE acknowledge there are in the Scriptures some Things hard to be understood, 2 *Pet.* iii. 16. the sublime and mysterious Nature of the Matter rendering it so; and some Things hard to be interpreted from the Manner of Expression, as indeed all mystical Parts of Scripture and prophetic Predictions are. The Spirit of GOD this Way designedly casts a Veil over them, 'till the proper Season of their Revelation and Accomplishment be come. Besides (as the learned *Glossius* observes) in St. *Paul's* Style there are found some peculiar Words and Forms of Speech, which ordinary Rules of Grammar take no Notice, nor give any parallel Examples of; as, *to be buried with Christ; to be baptized into his Death;* to which I may add, *to be circumcised in Him.* There are also Multitudes of Words found in Scripture of various and vastly different Significations; and accordingly there is a Diversity, and sometimes a Contrariety of Senses given of them by Expositors; which to an Humourist, or quarrelsome Wit, give an Occasion to vent his Errors with a plausible Appearance of Scripture.

BUT notwithstanding all this, the great and necessary Things are so plainly revealed in the Scriptures, that even Babes in *Christ* do apprehend and understand them, *Matt.* xi. 25. 1 *Cor.* i. 27, 28, 29. And though there be Difficulties in other Points more remote from the Foundation; yet the Spirit



Spirit of GOD is not to be accused, but rather his Wisdom to be admired herein. For, (1.) This serves to excite the most intense Study and Diligence, which by this Difficulty is made necessary; the very Prophets, yea the very Angels search into these Things, 1 *Pet.* i. 11, 12. (2.) Hereby a standing Ministry in the Church is made necessary, *Neb.* viii. 8. *Eph.* iv. 11, 12, 13. So that to pretend Obscurity of Scripture to be the culpable Cause of Error, when indeed the Fault is in ourselves; this is too much like our Father *Adam*, who would implicitly accuse GOD, to excuse himself; he laid it upon the *Woman* which GOD gave him, and we upon the *Scriptures* which GOD hath given us.

THE proper Remedies and Preventives in this Case are an heedful Attendance to, and Practice of these Rules.

# RULE I.

LET all obscure and difficult Texts of Scripture be constantly examined and expounded according to the Analogy or Proportion of Faith, which is *St. Paul's* own Rule, *Rom.* xii. 6 *Let him that prophesieth, (i. e. expoundeth the Scripture in the Church) do it according to the Proportion of Faith.* The Analogy or Proportion of Faith is what is taught plainly and uniformly in the whole Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as the Rule of our Faith and Obedience. Whilst we carefully and sincerely attend hereunto, we are secured from sinful Corrupting the Word of GOD. Admit of no Sense which interfereth with this Proportion of Faith. If Men have no Regard to this, but take Liberty to rend off a single Text from the Body of Truth to which it belongs, and put a peculiar Interpretation upon it which is discordant to other Scriptures, what Work will they quickly make?

## R U L E II.

NEVER put a new Sense upon Words of Scripture in Favour of your pre-conceived Notions, nor wrest it from its general and common Use and Sense. This is not to interpret, but to wreck the Scriptures, as that Word *σπείλαιον* signifies, 2 Pet.. iii. 16. We are not to make the Scriptures speak what we think, but what the Prophet or Apostle thought, whom we interpret. In 1 Cor. vii. 14. we meet with the Word [*holy*] applied to the Children of Believers; that Word is above five hundred Times used for a State of Separation to God: Therefore to make it signify in that Place Nothing but Legitimacy, is a bold and daring practising upon the Scripture.

## R U L E III.

WHENEVER you meet with an obscure Place of Scripture, let the Context of that Scripture be thoroughly searched; for it is usual with God to set up Light there to guide us through the Obscurity of a particular Text. And there is much Truth in the Observation of the *Rabbins*, *Nulla est obiectio in Lege, quæ non habet solutionem in latere*. There is no Scruple or Objection in the Law, but it hath a Solution at the Side of it.

## R U L E IV.

LET one Testament freely cast its Light upon the other; and let not Men under-value or reject an Old Testament Text, as no Way useful to clear and establish a New Testament Point of Faith or Duty. Each Testament reflects Light upon the other. The *Jews* reject the New Testament, and many among us sinfully slight the Old; But with-

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out the Help of both, we can never understand the Mind of God in either. It is a good Rule in the Civil-Law, *Turpe est de Lege judicare, totâ Lege nondum inspectâ*. We must inspect the whole Law, to know the Sense of any particular Law.

R U L E V.

HAVE a due Regard to that Sense given of obscure Places of Scripture, which hath not only the current Sense of learned Expositors, but also naturally agrees with the Scope of the Place. A careless Neglect and Disregard to this, is justly blamed by the Apostle, *1 Tim. i. 7.*

A SECOND evil Temper disposing and inclining Men to and suck in erroneous Doctrines and Opinions, is the *Abuse* of that just and due *Christian Liberty* allowed by *Christ* to all his People to read, examine, and judge the Sense of Scriptures with a private Judgment of Discretion.

THIS is a glorious Acquisition, and blessed Fruit of Reformation, to vindicate and recover that just Right, and gracious Grant made to us by *Christ* and the Apostles, out of the Hands of our Popish Enemies, who had usurped it. The Exercise of this Liberty, is at once a Duty commanded by *Christ*, and commended in Scripture. It is commanded by *Christ*, *John v. 39. Search the Scriptures, saith Christ to the People. 1 Cor. x. 15. I speak as to wise Men, judge you what I say.* And the Exercise of this private Judgment of Discretion by the People, is highly commended by *St. Paul* in the *Bereans, Acts xvii. 11. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all Readiness of Mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether those Things were so.* This Liberty



erty is not allowed in any Religion, as it is in the Christian Religion, nor enjoyed in its Fulness, as it is in the Reformed Religion, whose Glory it is that it allows its Principles and Doctrines to be critically examined and tried of all Men by the Rule of the Word, as well knowing, the more it is sifted and searched by its Professors, the more they will be confirmed and satisfied in the Truth of it.

BUT yet this just Liberty of Christians, suffers a double Abuse: One from the Popish Enemies, who injuriously deny it to the People. Another, by Protestants themselves, who sinfully stretch it beyond the just Degree and Measure in which *Christ* allows it to them.

THE Pope injuriously restrains it, discerning the Danger that must necessarily follow the Concession of such a Liberty to the People, to compare his superstitious and erroneous Doctrines with the Rule of the Word.

AND *secondly*, It is frequently abused, by stretching it beyond *Christ's* Allowance; when every ignorant and confident Person shall, under Pretence of Liberty granted by *Christ*, rudely break in upon the sacred Text, distort, violate, and abuse the Scriptures at Pleasure, by putting such strange and foreign Senses upon them, as the Spirit of GOD never intended.

The proper Way to prevent and remedy this Mischief, is not by depriving any Man of his just Liberty, either to read, or judge for himself what GOD speaks in his Word; that were the same Thing as to cut off an Head to cure an Head-ach. Leave that sinful Policy with the false Religion. Let those only that know they do Evil, be afraid of

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coming to the Light. But the proper Course of preventing the Mischiefs that come this Way, is by labouring to contain Christians within those Limits *Christ* Himself hath set unto this Liberty which He hath granted them. And these are such as follow :

1. **THOUGH** *Christ* have indulged to the meanest and weakest Christian a Liberty to read and judge of the Scriptures for himself; yet He hath neither thereby, nor therewith granted him a Liberty, publickly to expound and preach the Word to others: That is quite another Thing.

**CHRISTIANS** may privately edify one another by Reading the Scriptures, communicating their Sense one to another of them, admonishing, counselling, reprovng one another in a private fraternal Way, at Seasons wherein they interfere not with more publick Duties: But for every one that hath Confidence enough (and the ignorant are usually best stock'd with it) to assume a Liberty to expound and give the Sense of Scriptures, and pour forth his own wild Notions, as the pure Sense and Meaning of **GOD'S** Spirit in the Scriptures; this is what *Christ* never allowed, and through this Flood-gate Errors have broken in, and over flowed the Church of **GOD**, to the great Scandal of Religion, and Confirmation of Popish Enemies.

2. **THOUGH** there be no Part of Scripture shut up or restrained from the Knowledge or Use of any Christian; yet *Christ* hath recommended to Christians of different Abilities, the Study of some Parts of Scripture rather than others; as more proper and agreeable to their Age and Stature in Religion.

**CHRISTIANS** are by the Apostle ranked into three Classes, *Fathers, Young Men, and Little Children,*

dren, 1 John ii. 13. and accordingly the Wisdom of Christ hath directed to that Sort of Food which is proper to either: For there is in the Word all Sorts of Food suitable to all Ages in Christ; there is both *Milk* for *Babes*, and *strong Meat* for *grown Christians*, Heb. v. 13, 14. Those that are unskilful in the Word of Righteousness, should feed upon *Milk*, that is, the easy, plain, but most nutritive practical Doctrines of the Gospel. But *strong Meat* (saith he) that is the most abstruse, deep, and mysterious Truths, belongeth to them that are of full Age, even those who, by Reason of Use, have their Senses exercised to discern both Good and Evil; that is, Truth and Error. To the same Purpose he speaks, 1 Cor. iii. 2. *I have fed you with Milk, and not with Meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it.*

ART thou a weak unstudied Christian? a Babe in Christ? Then the easier, and more nutritive Milk of Plain Gospel-doctrine is fitter for thee, and will do thee more Good, than the stronger Meat of profound and more mysterious Points; or the Bones of Controversy, which are too hard for thee to deal with.

THERE is another evil Disposition in the Mind, rendering it easily receptive of Errors, and that is spiritual *Slothfulness* and *Carlelessness* in a due and serious Search of the whole Scripture, with a sedate and rational Consideration of every Part and Particle therein, which may give us any, though the least Light to understand the Mind of God in those difficult Points we search after the Knowledge of.

TRUTH lies deep, as the rich Veins of Gold do, Prov. ii. If we will get the Treasure, we must not only



only beg, as he directs, v. iii. but dig also, v. iv. else as he speaks, *Prov. xiv. 23. The Talk of the Lips tends only to Poverty.* We are not to take up with that which lies uppermost, and next at Hand upon the Surface of the Text; but to search with the most sedate and considerative Mind into all Parts of the written Word, examining every Text which hath any Respect to the Truth we are searching for, heedfully to observe the Scope, Antecedents, and Consequents, and to value every Tittle and Iota; for each of these are of Divine Authority. And sometimes great Weight is laid upon a Word, as appears in the Names of *Abraham* and *Sarai*.

It will require some Strength of Mind, and great Sedulity, to lay all Parts of Scripture before us, and to compare Words with Words, and Things with Things, as the Apostle speaks, *1 Cor. ii. 13. comparing spiritual Things with spiritual.* And though it be true that some important Doctrines, as that of Justification by Faith, are methodically disposed, and thoroughly cleared and settled in one and the same Context; yet it is as true, that many other Points of Faith, and Duty are not so digested, but are delivered here a little, and there a little. You must not think to find all that belongs to one Head or Point of Faith or Duty, laid together in a System, or common Place in Scripture; but scattered Abroad in several Pieces, some in the Old Testament, and some in the New, at a great Distance one from another.

Now in our Searches and Inquiries after the full and satisfying Knowledge of the Will of God in such Points, it is necessary that the whole Word of God be thoroughly searched, and all those Parcels brought together to an Interview. *Ex. Gr.*

If a Man would see the entire Discovery that was made of *Christ*, to the Fathers, under the Old Testament, he shall not find it laid together in any one Prophet; but shall find that one speaks to one Part of it, and another to another.

*Moses* gives the first general Hint of it, *Gen. iii. 15. The Seed of the Woman shall break the Serpent's Head.* But then if you would know more particularly of whose Seed, according to the Flesh, he should come, you must turn to *Gen. xxii. 18. In thy Seed* (saith *God* to *Abraham*) *shall all Nations of the Earth be blessed.* And if you yet doubt what Seed *God* means there, you must turn to the Apostle, *Gal. iii. 16. To thy Seed*, which is *Christ*. If you would further know the Place of his Nativity, the Prophet *Micah* must inform you of that, *Mic. v. 2. it should be Bethlehem-Ephrata.* If you enquire of the Quality of his Parent, another Prophet gives you that, *Isa. vii. 14. Behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and call his Name Immanuel.* If the Time of his Birth be enquired after, *Moses* and *Daniel* must inform you of that, *Gen. xlix. 10. Dan. ix. 24.*

So under the New Testament, If a Man enquire about the Change of the Sabbath, he must not expect to find a formal Repeal of the Seventh Day, and an express Institution of the first Day in its Room; but he is to consider,

*First, WHAT* the Evangelist speaks, *Mark ii. 28. That Christ is LORD of the Sabbath*, and so had Power, not only to dispense with it, but to change it.

*Secondly, THAT* on the first Day of the Week *Christ* rose from the Dead, *Matt. xxviii. 1, 2.* And  
this

this is that great Day, foretold to be the Day, to be solemnized upon that Account, *Psal. cxviii. 24.*

*Thirdly*, THAT accordingly the first Day of the Week is emphatically styled the LORD's Day, *Rev. i. 10.* where you find his own Name written upon it.

*Fourthly*, You shall find this was the Day on which the Apostles and Primitive Christians assembled together for the stated and solemn Performance of publick Worship, *John xx. 19.* and other publick Church Acts and Duties, *1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.* And so putting together, and considering all these Particulars, we draw a just Conclusion, That it is the Will of God, that since the Resurrection of *Christ*, the first Day of the Week should be observed as the Christian-Sabbath.

In like Manner as for the Baptizing of Believers Infants: We are not to expect it in the express Words of a New Testament Institution or Command, that Infants under the Gospel should be baptized; but God hath left us to gather Satisfaction about his Will and our Duty in that Point, by comparing and considering the several Scriptures of the Old and New Testament which relate to that Matter; which if we be impartial we may do.

*First*, BY considering, that by God's express Command, *Gen. xvii. 9, 10.* the Infant Seed of his People were taken into Covenant with their Parents, and the then Sign of that Covenant commanded to be applied to them.

*Secondly*, THAT though the Sign be altered, the Promise and Covenant is still the same, and runs as it did before, to Believers and their Children, *Acts ii. 38, 39.*

*Thirdly*,



*Thirdly*, THAT the federal Holiness of our Children is plainly asserted under the New Testament, 1 Cor. vii. 14. Rom. xi. 16.

*Fourthly*, WE shall further find, that Baptism succeeds in the Room of Circumcision, and that by an Argument drawn from the Compleatness of our Priviledges under the New Testament, no Way inferior, but rather more extensive than those of the *Jews*, Col. ii. 10, 11, 12.

*Fifthly*, WE shall find that upon the Conversion of any Master or Parent, the whole Household were Baptized. By putting all these Things, with some others, together, we may arrive to the desired Satisfaction about the Will of GOD in this Matter.

BUT some Men want Abilities, and others are too lazy to gather together, compare and weigh all these and many more Hints and Discoveries of the Mind of GOD, which would give much Light unto this Point; but they take an easier and cheaper Way to satisfy themselves with what lies uppermost upon the Surface of Scripture, and so, as it were by Consent, let go, and lose their own, and their Childrens blessed and invaluable Priviledges, for Want of a little Labour and and Patience to search the Scriptures; a Folly which few would be gully of, if but a small earthly Inheritance were concerned therein.

To cure this Spiritual Sluggishness, and awaken us to the most serious and diligent Search after the Will of GOD in difficult Points, that we may not neglect the smallest Hint given us about it, the following Considerations will be found of great Use.

I THE most sedate, impartial, and diligent Enquiries after the Will of GOD revealed in his Word, is a Duty expressly enjoined by his sovereign Command, which immediately and indispensibly binds the Conscience of every Christian to the Practice of it.

REMARKABLE is that Text to this Purpose, *Rom. xii. 2. And be not conformed to this World; but be ye transformed by the Renewing of your Mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect Will of God.* Here you find this Duty, not only associated with, but made the very End of our Non-conformity to the World, and Renovation of our Minds; the very Things which constitute a Christian.

AND to sweeten our Pains in this Work, that Will of GOD, for the Discovery whereof we search, is presented to us under three illustrious and alluring Properties, viz. *Good, Acceptable, and Perfect.* *Good* it must needs be, because the Will and Essence of GOD, the chief Good, are not two Things, but one and the same. And *Perfect* it must needs be, because it is the Standard, by which the Actions of all reasonable Creatures ought to be weighed, as to the moral Good or Evil of them, and being both *Good* and *Perfect*, how can it chuse but, upon both Accounts, be highly *Acceptable* and grateful to an upright Soul. Search the Scriptures, saith Christ, *John v. 39. To the Law and to the Testimony*, saith the Prophet, *Isa. viii. 20.* This is not Matter of mere Christian Liberty, but commanded Duty; and at our Peril be it if we neglect it.

2. No Act of ours can be good and acceptable to the LORD, further than it is agreeable to his Will revealed in the Word.

No Man can be a Rule to himself. He can be no more his own Rule than his own End. One Man cannot be a Rule to another. The best of Men, and their Actions, and Examples, are only so far a Rule of Imitation to us, as they themselves are ruled by the Divine revealed Will, 1 Cor. xi. 1. Uncommanded Acts of Worship are abominable to GOD, and highly dangerous to ourselves; they kindle the Fire of his Jealousy to the Ruin and Destruction of the presumptuous Sinner. So that if the Beauty and Excellency of the Will of GOD be not enough to allure us, the Danger of acting without the Knowledge of it may justly terrify us.

3. IN this Duty we tread in the Footsteps of the wisest and holiest Men that ever went to Heaven before us.

IT is not only the Characteristical Note of a good Man, Psal. i. 2. but it has been the constant Practice of the most eminent Believers in all Ages. The greatest Prophets that had this Advantage of us, that they were the Organs or inspired Instruments of discovering the Will of GOD to others, yet were not excused from, neither did they neglect to search it diligently themselves, 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. Daniel, that great Favourite from Heaven, who had the Visions and Revelations of GOD; yet himself diligently searched the written Word, in order to the Discovery of the Mind of GOD, Dan. ix. 2.

4. EVERY



4. EVERY Discovery of the Will of God by fervent Prayer, diligent and impartial Search of the Scriptures, and all other allowed Helps, gives the highest Pleasure the Mind of Man is capable of in this World.

If *Archimedes*, upon the Discovery of a Mathematical Truth, was so transported and ravished, that he cried out, *εὕρηκα, εὕρηκα, I have found it, I have found it*; what Pleasure then must the Investigation and Discovery of a Divine Truth give to a sanctified Soul! *Thy Words were found of me* (saith *Jeremiah*) *and I did eat them*; and *thy Word was unto me the Joy and Rejoicing of my Heart*, *Jer. xv. 16.* as pleasant Food to a famishing Man; for now Conscience is quieted, comforted, and cheered in the Way of Duty. A Man walks not at Adventure with God, as that Word signifies, *Levit. xxvi 40, 41.* but hath the pleasant directive Light of the Word and Will of God, shining sweetly upon the Path of his Duty.

5. By this Means you shall find your Faith greatly confirmed in the Truth of the Scriptures.

THE sweet Consent, and beautiful Harmony of all the Parts of the written Word, is a great Argument of its Divinity; and this you will clearly discern, when by a due Search you shall find Things that lie at the remotest Distance, to conspire and consent in one, and one Part casting Light, as well as adding Strength to another. Thus you shall find the New Testament veiled in the Old; and the Old revealed in the New: And that such a Consent of Things, so distant in Time and Place, can never be the Project and Invention of Man.

6. THE diligent and impartial Search and Enquiry after the Will of GOD, out of no other Design than to please Him in the whole Course of our Duties, will return to us for a Testimony of the Integrity and Sincerity of our Hearts.

*Thy Word (said Daniel) have I hid in my Heart, that I might not sin against Thee:* And GOD will not hide his Will from those that thus seek to know it. If Men would apply themselves to search the Word by fervent Prayer, and fixed Meditations, upon so pure a Design, not bringing their prejudiced or prepossessed Minds unto it; the Spirit of the LORD would guide them into all Truth, and keep them out of dangerous and destructive Errors.

BESIDES Slothfulness, there is found in many Persons another evil Disposition preparing them easily to receive erroneous Impressions; namely *Instability* and Fickleness of Judgment, and Unsettledness of Mind about the Truth of the Gospel.

OF this the Apostle warns us, *Eph. iv. 14. That we henceforth be no more Children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every Wind of Doctrine, by the Sleight of Men, and cunning Craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.* None are so constant and steady in the Profession of the Truth, as those that are fully convinced of, and well satisfied with the Grounds of it. Every Professor, like every Ship at Sea, should have an ἰδιον σπέρμιον, a Ballast and Steadiness of his own, *2 Pet. iii. 3, 17.* ready and prepared to render a Reason of the Hope that is in him, *1 Pet. iii. 15.* able upon all Occasions to give an Account of those inward Motives which constrained his Assent to the Truth.

He that professeth a Truth ignorantly, cannot be rationally supposed to adhere to it constantly. He that is but half convinced of a Truth, when he engages in the Profession of it, must needs be a double-minded Man, as the Apostle calls him, *Jam. i. 8.* half the Mind hangs one Way, and half another, and so it is easily moved this Way or that with the least Breath or Temptation. And hence it comes to pass they are so often at a Loss about their Duty and their Practice; for a doubtful Mind must needs make a staggering and uncertain Practice.

ERRONEOUS Teachers are called *wandering Stars*, Jude xiii. which keep no certain Course as the fixed Stars do, but are sometimes nearer and sometimes remoter one from another. Thus Errorists first imbibe unsettling Opinions, and then discover them in their inconstant Practices.

AND this Instability of Judgment proceeds either from Hypocrisy or Weakness. Sometimes from Hypocrisy; all Hypocrites are double-minded Men: *Jer. iv. 8.* *The double-minded Man* (that is, the Hypocrite) *is unstable in all his Ways.* One of that Number was not ashamed to say, "That he had two Souls in one Body, one for God, and another for whosoever would have it."

SOMETIMES Instability of Mind is the Effect only of Weakness in the Judgment, proceeding merely from Want of Age and Growth in *Christ*, not having as yet attained Senses exercised to discern both Good and Evil; they are but Children in *Christ*, and Children are easy and credulous Creatures, presently taken away with a new Toy, and as soon as weary of it; such a wavering and



unstable Temper invites Temptation, and falls an easy Prey into its Hands.

I CONFESS some Cases may happen, where the Pretences on both Sides may be so fair, as to put a judicious Christian to a Stand which to chuse; but then their Deliberation will be answerable, and they will not change their Opinions every Month, as *Scepticks* do. Wherever Error finds such a mutable Disposition, its Work is half done before it makes one Assault. The giddy-headed Multitude have more Regard to Novelty, than Truth.

How necessary and desirable are some effectual Rules and Remedies in this Case! O what a Mercy would it be to the Professors of these Days, to have their Minds fixed, and their Judgments settled in the Truths of *Christ*! Happy is that Man whose Judgment is so guarded, that no dangerous Error or Heresy can commit a Rape upon it. To this End I shall here commend the four following Rules to prevent this vertiginous Malady in the Heads of Christians.

i. LOOK warily to it that you get a real inward Implantation into *Christ*, and lay the Foundation deep and firm in a due and serious Deliberation of Religion whenever you engage in the publick Profession of it.

To this Sense sound the Apostle's Words, *Col.* ii. 6, 7. *As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the LORD, so walk ye in Him, rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the Faith, as you have been taught. Fertility and Stability in Christ, a Pair of inestimable Blessings, depend upon a good Rooting of the Soul in Him at first. He that thrusts a*

dead

dead Stick into the Ground, may easily pull it up again, but so he cannot do by a well-rooted Tree. A Colour raised by violent Action, or a great Fire, soon dies away, but that which is natural or constitutional will hold. Every Thing is as its Foundation is. It was Want of a good Root and due Depth of Earth which soon turned the green Corn into dry Stubble, *Matt. xiii. 21.*

2. LABOUR after an inward experimental Taste of those Truths which you profess.

THIS will preserve your Minds from Wavering and Hesitation about the Certainty and Reality of them. We will not easily part with those Truths which have sensibly shed down their sweet Influences upon our Hearts. No Sophister can easily persuade a Man that hath tasted the Sweetness of Honey, that it is a bitter and unpleasant Thing: You cannot easily persuade a Man out of his Senses.

3. STUDY hard and pray earnestly for Satisfaction in the present Truths; *2 Pet. i. 12. That you may be established in τῇ παρόντι ἀληθείᾳ, in the Truth that now is under Opposition and Controversy.* Be not ignorant of the Truths that lie in present Hazard.

ANTIQUATED Opinions that are more abstracted from our present Interest, are no Trials of the Soundness of our Judgments, and Integrity of our Hearts, as the Controversies and Conflicts of the present Times are. Every Truth hath its Time to come upon the Stage, and enter the Lists, some in one Age, and some in another; but Providence seems to have cast the Lot of your Nativity for the Honour and Defence of those Truths with which

which Error is struggling and conflicting in your Time.

*Lastly*, Be thoroughly sensible of the Benefit and Good of Establishment, and of the Evil and Danger of a wavering Mind and Judgment.

*Be not carried away with divers and strange Doctrines* (saith the Apostle) *for it is a good Thing that the Heart be established*, Heb. xiii. 9. Established Souls are the Honour of Truth. It was the Honour of Religion in the primitive Days, that when the Heathens would proverbially express an Impossibility, they used to say, "You may as soon turn a Christian from *Christ*, as do it."

THE Fickleness of Professors is a Stumbling-block to the World. They will say as *Cato* of the Civil Wars betwixt *Cæsar* and *Pompey*, *Quem fugiam, video, quem sequar, non video*: They know whom to avoid, but not whom to follow. And as the Honour of Truth, so the Flourishing of your own Souls depend on it. A Tree often removed from one Soil to another, can never be expected to be fruitful, it is well if it make a Shift to live.

ANOTHER inward Cause disposing Men to receive erroneous Impressions, is an unreasonable *Eagerness* to snatch at any Doctrine or Opinion that promiseth Ease to an anxious Conscience.

MEN that are under Terrors of Conscience, are willing to listen to any Thing that offers present Relief. Of all the Troubles in the World, those of the Conscience are most intolerable. And those that are in Pain are glad of Ease, and readily catch at any Thing that seems to offer it.

THIS



THIS seems to be the Thing which led those poor distressed Wretches, intimated *Micah* vi. 6. into their gross Mistakes about the Method of the Remission of their Sins. *Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high GOD? Shall I come before Him with Burnt-Offerings, with Calves of a Year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of Rams, or with ten thousands of Rivers of Oil? Shall I give my First-born for my Transgression, the Fruit of my Body for the Sin of my Soul?* They were ready to purchase inward Peace, and buy their Pardon at any Rate: Nothing but the Pangs of Conscience could have extorted these Things from them. Great is the Efficacy and Torment of a guilty Conscience.

SATAN, who feels more of this in himself than any other Creature in the World, and knows how ready poor ignorant, but distressed Sinners are to catch at any Thing that looks like Ease or Comfort, and being jealous what these Troubles of Conscience may issue in, prepares for them such erroneous Doctrines and Opinions under the Names Anodines and quieting Recipes, by swallowing of which they feel some present Ease, but their Disease is thereby made so much the more incurable.

It is upon this Account he hath found such Vent in the World for his Penances, Pilgrimages and Indulgences among the Papists. But seeing this Ware will not go off among the more enlightened Professors of Christianity, he changeth his Hand, and fitteth other Doses under other Names, to quiet sick and distressed Souls, before ever their Frights of Conscience come to settle into true Repentance and Faith in the Blood of *Christ*, by dressing up and presenting to them such Opinions as these, *viz.* That the Covenant of Grace is in  
all

all Respects absolute, and is made to Sinners as Sinners, without any Regard to their Faith or Repentance; and whatever Sins there be in them, God sees them not.

To such a Charm of Troubles as this, how earnestly doth the Ear of a distressed Conscience listen? How greedily doth it suck in such pleasing Words? Are all Sins that are pardoned, pardon'd before they are committed? And does the Covenant of Grace require neither Repentance nor Faith antecedently to the Application of the Promises? How groundless then are all my Fears and Troubles? This, like a Dose of Opium, quiets, or rather stupifies the raging Conscience: For even an Error in Judgment, 'till it be detected and discovered to be so, quiets the Heart, as well as Principles of Truth; but whenever the Fallacy shall be detected, whether here or hereafter, the Anguish of Conscience must be increased, or (which is worse) left desperate.

To prevent and cure this Mistake in the Soul, by which it is fitted and prepared to catch any erroneous Principle (which is but plausible) for its present Relief and Ease, I shall desire my Reader seriously to ponder and consider the following Queries upon this Case:

I. WHETHER by the Vote of the whole rational World, a good Trouble be not better than a false Peace? Present Ease is desirable, but eternal Safety is much more so: And if these two cannot consist under the present Circumstances of the Soul, Whether it be not better to endure for a Time these painful Pangs, than feel more acute and eternal ones, by quieting Conscience with false Remedies before the Time?

IT is bad to lie tossing a few Days under a laborious Fever ; but far worse to have that Fever turned into a Lethargy or Apoplexy. Erroneous Principles may rid the Soul of its present Pain, and eternal Hopes and Safety together. Acute Pains are better than a senseless Stupidity. Though the present Rage of Conscience be not a right and kindly Conviction, yet it may lead to it, and terminate in Faith and Union with *Christ* at last, if *Satan* do not this Way practise upon it, and quench it before its Time.

2. BETHINK yourselves seriously, Whether Troubles so quieted and laid asleep, will not revive and turn again upon thee with a double Force, as soon as the Virtue of the Drug (I mean the erroneous Principle) hath spent itself?

THE Efficacy of Truth is eternal, and will maintain the Peace it gives for ever ; but all Delusions must vanish, and the Troubles which they dammed up for a Time, break out with a greater Force.

SUCH are the Cures of inward Troubles by erroneous Principles. I lament the Case of blinded Papists, who by Pilgrimages, and Offerings to the Shrines of Titular Saints, attempt the Cure of a lesser Sin by committing a greater. Is it because there is not a GOD in *Israel*, who is able in due Season to pacify Conscience with proper and durable Gospel-Remedies, that we suffer our Troubles thus to precipitate us into the Snares of *Satan* for the Sake of present Ease ?

3. READ the Scriptures, and enquire whether GOD's People, who have lain long under sharp inward Terrors, have not at last found Settlement and



and inward Peace by those very Methods which the Principles that quiet you do utterly exclude?

If you will fetch your Peace from a groundless Notion, that you may apply boldly and confidently to yourselves the choicest Promises in the Gospel, without any Regard to Faith or Repentance wrought by the Spirit in your Souls: I am sure holy *David* took another Course for the Settlement of his Conscience, *Pf.* li. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. And it hath been the constant Practice of the Saints in all Ages, to clear their Title to the Righteousness of *Christ* wrought without them, by the Works of his Spirit wrought within them.

THE next evil Temper in the Mind, preparing and disposing it for Error, is an easy *Credulity*, or sequacious Humour in Men, rendering them apt to receive Things upon Trust, without due and thorough Examination of the Grounds and Reasons of them.

THIS is a Disposition fitted to receive any Impression Seducers please to make upon them: They are said to deceive the Hearts of the Simple, *αἰαῖν*, i. e. credulous, but well-meaning People that suspect no Harm. It is said, *Prov.* xiv. 15. *The Simple believeth every Word.* Thro' this Floodgate what a Multitude of Errors in Popery have overflowed the People! They are told, they are not able to judge for themselves, but must take the Matters of their Salvation upon Trust from their Spiritual Guides; and to the silly People are easily seduced, and made easily receptive of the grossest Absurdities their ignorant Leaders please to impose upon them.

AND

AND it were to be wished that those two Points, the dumb Services of their Ministers, and the blind Obedience of the People, had stayed within the *Popish* Confine. But, alas! how many simple Protestants are there, who may be said to carry their Brain in other Mens Heads? and like silly Sheep follow the next in the Tract before them; especially if their Leaders have but Wit and Art enough to hide their Errors under specious and plausible Pretences. How many poisonous Drugs hath *Satan* put off under the gilded Titles of Antiquity, or Zeal for God? How natural is it for Men to follow in the Tract, and be tenacious of the Principles and Practices of their Progenitors? Multitudes seem to hold their Opinions by an hereditary Right, as if their Faith descended to them the same Way their Estates do.

THE Emperor of *Morocco* told King *John's* Embassador, "That he had lately read *St. Paul's* Epistles; and truly (said he) were I now to chuse my Religion, I would embrace Christianity before any Religion in the World; but every Man ought to die in that Religion he received from his Ancestors."

THE Remedies and Preventions in this Case are such as follow:

I. It is beneath a Man to profess any Opinion to be his own, whilst the Grounds and Reasons of it are in other Mens keeping, and wholly unknown to himself.

If a Man may tell Gold after his Father, then sure he may and ought to try and examine Doctrines and Points of Faith after him. We are commanded to be ready to give an Account of the

*Hope that is in us*, and not to say, this or that is my Judgment or Opinion, but let others give an Account of the Ground and Reason of it.

I CONFESS, if he that leads me into an Error were alone exposed to the Hazard, and I quit and free, whatever become of him, it were quite another Thing. But when our Saviour tells us, *Matt. xv. 14.* that *both* (i. e. the Follower as well as the Leader) *shall fall into the Ditch*; at my Peril be it if I follow without Eyes of my own. That is but a weak Building that is shored up by a Prop from a Neighbour's Wall. How many Men have ruined their Estates by Suretiship for others? But of all Suretiships none so dangerous as spiritual Suretiship. "We neither ought (as a late Worker speaks) to defy the Judgment of the weakest, nor on the other Side to deify the Judgment of the strongest Christian." He that pins his Faith upon another Man's Sleeve, knows not whither he will carry it.

2. As you ought not to abuse your Christian Privilege and Liberty to try all Things, so neither on the other Side to undervalue or part with it. See the Things that so much concern your eternal Peace with your own Eyes.

I shewed you before, this Liberty is abused by extending it too far; and under the Notion of proving all Things, many embolden themselves to innovate and entertain any Thing; yet beware of bartering such a precious Privilege for the fairest Promises others can make in Lieu of it. I would not slight nor undervalue the Piety and Learning of others, nor yet put out my own Eyes to see by theirs.



3. BEFORE you adventure to espouse the Opinions of others, diligently observe the Fruits and Consequences of those Opinions in the Lives of the zealous Abettors and Propagators of them: *By their Fruits (saith Christ) ye shall know them.*

WHEN the Opinion or Doctrine naturally tends to Looseness, or when it sucks and draws away all a Man's Zeal to maintain and diffuse it, and practical Religion thereby visibly languishes in their Conversations, it is Time for you to make a Pause, before you advance one Step farther towards it.

THE next evil Disposition that I shall note, is a vain *Curiosity*, or an itching Desire to pry into Things unrevealed, at least above our Ability to search out and discover.

It is an Observation as true as ancient, *Pruritus aurium scabies Ecclesiae*, Itching Ears come to a Scab upon the Face of the Church. The Itch of Novelty produceth the Scab of Error. Of this Disease the Apostle warns us, *2 Tim. iv. 3. For the Time will come, when they shall not endure sound Doctrine; but after their own Lusts shall they heap to themselves Teachers, having itching Ears.* Nothing will please them but new Notions, and new Modes of Language and Method, Tone and Gesture.

SOUND Doctrine is the only substantial and solid Food that nourishes and strengthens the Heart of real Christians: But vain *Scepticks* nauseate and despise this as trite, vulgar, cheap and low. Nothing humours them but Novelties and Rarities: Their unsettled Brains must be wheeled

about, with *divers and strange Doctrines*, Heb. xiii. 9. Novelty and Variety are the only Properties that commend Doctrines to wanton Palates. Hence it is they so boldly intrude into Things they have not seen, Col. ii. 18.

THE Schoolmen have filled the World with a thousand ungrounded Fancies, as the distinct Offices and Orders of *Angels*; and higher Flights of Fancy than these, which seem to be invented for no other End or Use, but to please the itching Ears of the Curious.

THERE is not only a *vesana temeritas Genethliacorum*, a wild and daring Rashness of Astrologers, presuming to foretel Futurities, and the Fates of Kingdoms, as well as particular Persons, from the Conjunctions and Influences of the Stars; but there is also found as high a Presumption and Boldness among Men in Matters of Religion.

SATAN is well aware of this Humour in Men, and how exceeding serviceable it is to his Design; and therefore having the very Knack of clawing and pleasing itching Ears with taking Novelties, he is never wanting to feed their Minds with a pleasing Variety, and fresh Succession of them: New Opinions are still invented and minted, in which the dangerous Hooks of Error are hid. If Men were once cured of this spiritual Itch, and their Minds reduced to that Temper and Sobriety, as to be pleased with, and bless God for the plain revealed Truths of the Gospel; Satan would drive but a poor Trade, and find but few Customers for his erroneous Novelties.

THE proper Remedies to cure this Itch after Novelty, or dangerous Curiosity of the Mind, are,

I. DUE Recollection upon the manifold Mischiefs that have entered into the World this Way.

IT was this Curiosity and Desire to know, that overthrew our first Parents, *Gen. iii. 6. When the Woman saw that the Tree was good for Food, and that it was pleasant to the Eyes, and a Tree to be desired to make one wise; she took of the Fruit thereof.* The very same Way by which he let in the first Error, he hath let Thousands into the World since that Day. Nothing is more common in the World, than for an old Error to obtain afresh under the Name of new Light. Satan hath the very Art of shaping stale Errors after the Mode of the present Times, and make them current and passable, as new Discoveries and rare Novelties.

THUS he puts off Libertinism, the old Sin of the World, under the Title of Christian Liberty. What a Troop of Pagan idolatrous Rites were by this Means introduced among the Papists? A great Part of Popery is but *Ethnicismus redivivus*, Heathenism revived. The Pagan Pontifex Maximus was revived under the Title of Pope. The Gentiles Lustrations, in the Popish Holy-Water. Their *Novendiale sacrum*, or Sacrifice nine Days after the Burial of the Party, in the Popish Masses for the Dead. Their *Aldarium Fratrum*, in Cloisters of Monks and Friars. Their Enchanters, in Popish Exorcists. Their *Asyla*, in Popish Sanctuaries. With Multitudes more of Pagan Rites quite out of Date in Christendom, introduced again under new Names in Popery; as was intimated, *Rom. xi. 2. and Rev. xiii. 15.*



2. Be satisfied that God hath not left his People to seek their Salvation, or spiritual Subsistence, among curious, abstruse and doubtful Notions; but in the great, solid, and plainly revealed Truths of the Gospel. *John xvii. 3. This is Life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. In Father's absolute flat eternitas.* The great Concerns of our Salvation are plain and easy to be understood.

3. VAIN Curiosity is a dangerous Snare of Satan. By such Trifles as these, he devours our Time, eats up our Strength, and diverts our Minds from the necessary and most important Business of Religion. Whilst we immerse our Thoughts in these pleasing, but barren Contemplations, Heart-Work, Closet-Work, Family-Work, lie by neglected. Whilst we are employed in garnishing the Dish with Flowers, and curious Figures, the cunning Cheat takes away the Meat our Souls should subsist by.

PRIDE and Arrogancy of human Reason, is another evil Disposition, moulding and preparing the Mind for Errors. When Men are once conceited of the Strength and Perspicacity of their own Reason, Nothing is more usual than for such Men to run mad with Reason into a thousand Mistakes and Errors.

REASON indeed is the highest Excellency of Man; it exalts him above all earthly Creatures, and in its primitive Perfection almost equalized him with Angels. The Pleasures which result from its Exercises and Experiments, transcend all the Pleasures of Sense. And though the Reason of fallen Man is greatly wounded and weakened by Sin, yet it conceits itself to be as strong and clear

as ever; and with *Sampson*, when his Locks were shorn, goes forth as before-time, being neither sensible of his own Weakness, nor of the mysterious and unsearchable Depths of Scripture.

REASON is our Guide by the Institution and Law of Nature, in civil and natural Affairs: It is the Standard at which we weigh them: It is an Home-born Judge and King in the Soul. Faith comes in as a Stranger to Nature, and so it is dealt with, even as an Intruder into Reason's Province, just as the *Sodomites* dealt with *Lot*. It refuseth to be an Underling to Faith. Out of this Arrogancy of carnal Reason, as from *Pandora's Box*, Swarms of Errors are flown abroad into the World.

By this Means *Socinianism* was first started, and hath since propagated itself. They took upon it as a ridiculous and unaccountable Thing to Reason, that the *Son* should be co-equal and co-eternal with the *Father*; that *God* should forgive Sins freely, and yet forgive none but upon full Satisfaction; that *Christ* should make that Satisfaction by his Sufferings, and yet be the Party offended, and so make Satisfaction to Himself: With many more of the like Stamp.

To take down the Arrogance, and prevent the Mischief of carnal Reasonings, let us be convinced,

1. THAT it is the Will of *God*, that Reason in all Believers should resign to Faith, and all Ratiocination submit to Revelation.

REASON is no better than an Usurper, when it presumes to arbitrate Matters belonging to Faith and Revelation: Reason's proper Place is to sit at

the

the Feet of Faith, and instead of searching the secret Grounds and Reasons, to adore and admire the great and unsearchable Mysteries of the Gospel. None of God's Works are unreasonable, but many of them are above Reason. It was as truly as ingenuously said by one; "Never doth Reason shew itself more reasonable, than when it ceaseth to reason about Things that are above Reason." *Where is the Wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the Disputer of this World? Hath not God made foolish the Wisdom of this World? For after that, in the Wisdom of God, the World by Wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the Foolishness of Preaching to save them that believe, 1 Cor. i. 20, 21. It is not Reason, but Faith that must save us.*

*THE Wisdom of God in the Gospel, is Wisdom in a Mystery, even hidden Wisdom, which God ordained before the World unto our Glory, 1 Cor. ii. 7. Such Wisdom as the most Eagle-eyed Philosophers of the World understood not. Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have entered into the Heart of Man the Things which God hath prepared for them that love Him: But God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit, Ibid. Verses 9, 10.*

2. BE convinced of the Weakness and deep Corruption of natural Reason, and this will restrain its Arrogance, and make it modest and wary.

A CONVINCED and renewed Soul is conscious to itself of its own Weakness and Blindness, and therefore dares not pry audaciously into the *Arcana Cæli*, nor summon the great God to its Bar. It finds itself posed by the Mysteries of Nature, and therefore concludes itself an incompetent Judge of the Mysteries of Faith.



THE Arrogancy of Reason is the reigning Sin of the Unregenerate, though it be a Disease with which the Regenerate themselves are infected. When Conviction shall do its Work upon the Soul, the Plumes of spiritual Pride quickly fall; and it saith with Job; *Once I have spoken, but I will speak no more; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further;* q. d. I have done, Father, I have done; I have uttered Things that I understood not, Job xlii. 3. Spiritual Illumination cures this Ambition.

3. CONSIDER the manifold Mischiefs and Evils flowing from the Pride of Reason.

It doth not only fill the World with Errors and Distractions; but it also invades the Rights of Heaven, and casts a vile Reflection upon the Wisdom, Sovereignty and Veracity of God. It lifts up itself against his Wisdom, not considering that *the Foolishness of God is wiser than Men*, 1 Cor. i. 25. It spurns at his glorious Sovereignty, not considering that *He giveth no Account of his Matters*, Job xxxiii. 13. It questions his Veracity, in saying with Nicodemus, *How can these Things be?*

THE last evil Disposition I shall here take Notice of, is rash and ignorant Zeal; a Temper preparing the Mind both to propagate furiously, and receive easily erroneous Doctrines and Opinions.

WHEN there is in the Soul more Heat than Light; when a fervent Spirit is governed by a weak Head, such a Temper of Spirit Satan desires, and singles out as fittest for his Purpose, especially when the Heart is graceless, as well as the Understanding weak. A blind Horse of an high Mettle will carry the Rider into any Pit, and venture over the most dangerous Precipices.

SUCH

SUCH were the superstitious *Jewish* Zealots, they had a Zeal for God, but not according to Knowledge. This *blind Zeal*, St. Paul charges justly upon the *Jewish* Bigots, *Rom. x. 2.* as the proper Cause of their dangerous Errors about the great Point of Justification: And surely no Man understood the Evil of it more than he, who in his unregenerate State was transported by it to the most furious Persecution of the Saints; and even to Dotage, and extreme Fondness upon the erroneous Traditions of his Fathers, *Gal. i. 14.*

BLIND Zeal is a Sword in a Madman's Hand. No Persecutor like a conscientious one, whose erroneous Conscience offers up the Blood of the Saints to the Glory of God. The blind, but zealous Pharisees *would compass Sea and Land to make one Profelyte*, *Matt. xxiii. 15.* as our modern Pharisees, the *Jesuits*, have since done, who have mingled themselves with the remotest and most barbarous Nations, to draw them to the *Romish* Error. Of the same Temper were the false Teachers taxed by the Apostle, *Gal. iv. 17.* *they zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you (viz. from our Society and Ordinances) that you might affect them.*

AND as it is the great Instrument by which *Satan* propagates Errors; so it makes a fit Temper in the Souls of the People to receive them. For by this Means Error gains the Possession of the Affections, without passing a previous and due Test by the Understanding, and so gains the Soul by the Advantage of a Surprise. Error cares not to endure the due Examination of Reason; and therefore seeks to gain by Surprizal, what it despairs of ever gaining by a plain and fair Trial.

THE best Defensatives against erroneous Contagions in this Case, are to be found in the following Particulars :

I. REFLECT seriously and sadly upon the manifold Mischiefs occasioned every-where, and in all Ages of the World, by rash Zeal.

REVOLVE Church-Histories, and you shall find, that scarce any cruel Persecution hath flamed in the World, which hath not been kindled by blind Zeal. Turn over all the Records, both of *Pagan* and *Popish* Persecutions, and you shall still find these two Observations confirmed and verified: (1.) That ignorant Zeal hath kindled the Fires of Persecution: And, (2.) That the more zealous any have been for the Ways of Error, still the more implacably fierce they have been to the sincere Servants of God. None like a superstitious *Devoto* to manage the Devil's Work of Persecution throughly, and to Purpose. They will rush violently and head-long into the Blood of their dearest Relations, to whose Sides the Devil sets this sharp Spur. Superstitious Zeal draws all the Strength and Power of the Soul into that one Design; and Woe to him that stands in the Way of such a Man, if God interpose not betwixt him and the Stroke.

Now consider, Reader, if thy Judgment be *weak*, and thy Affections *warm*, how much thou liest exposed, not only to Errors which may ruin thyself, but also to Persecution, wherein *Satan* may manage thy Zeal for the Injury or Ruin of those that are better than thyself: And withall consider, how many dreadful Threatnings are found in Scripture against the Instruments of Persecution, so employed and managed by *Satan*.



CERTAINLY, it were better for thee to stand with thy naked Breast before the Mouth of a discharging Cannon, than that thy Soul should stand under this Guilt, before such a Scripture-Threatning as that, *Psalms vii. 13. He hath also prepared for him the Instruments of Death; He ordaineth his Arrows against the Persecutors.* And none more likely to become such, than those of thine own Temper, especially if Grace be wanting in the Heart, whilst Zeal for erroneous Principles eats up the Affections.

2. CONSIDER what Mischief Zeal for an Error will do thine own Soul, as well as others.

It will wholly engross thy Time, Thoughts and Strength; so that if there be any gracious Principle in thee, it shall not be able to thrive and prosper: For as a Fever takes off the natural Appetite from Food, so will erroneous Zeal take off thy spiritual Appetite from Meditation, Prayer, Heart-Examination, and all other the most necessary and nourishing Duties of Religion, by Reason whereof thy Grace must languish.

WHEN thy Soul, with *David's*, should be filled as with Marrow and Fatness, by delightful Meditations of God upon thy Bed, thou wilt be rolling in thy Mind thy barren and insipid Notions, which yield no Food or spiritual Strength to thy Soul; thou wilt lie musing how to resolve the Arguments and Objections against thine Errors, when thou shouldst rather be employed in solving the just and weighty Objections that lie against thy Interest in *Christ*, which were Time far better improved.

3. CONSIDER how baneful this inordinate Zeal hath been to Christian Society, lamentably defacing and

and almost dissolving it every-where, to the unspeakable Detriment of the Churches.

WE read, *Mal. iii. 16.* of a blessed Time, when they that feared the LORD spake often one to another, and the LORD hearkened and heard it, and a Book of Remembrance was written before Him, for them that feared the LORD, and thought upon his Name. O happy Time! Halcyon Days! I myself remember the Time when the Zeal of the Saints spent itself in provoking one another to Love and good Works, in joint and fervent Prayer, in inward, experimental and edifying Communion; my Soul hath them still in Remembrance, and is cast down within me; for alas! how do I see every-where Christian Communion turned into vain Janglings? Churches and Families into mere Cock-pits? Mens Discourfings falling as naturally into Contentions about Trifles, as they were wont to do into heavenly and experimental Subjects, to the unspeakable Discharge and Damage of Religion?

4. THAT Opinion is justly to be suspected for erroneous, which comes in at the Postern-Door of the Affections; and not openly and fairly at the right Gate of an enlightned and well-satisfied Judgment. It is a Thief that cometh in at the Back-Door, at least strongly to be suspected for one. Truth courts the Mistrrels, makes its first and fair Addresses to the Understanding. Error bribes the Handmaid, and labours first to win the Affections, that by their Influence it may corrupt the Judgment.

AND thus you see, besides the innocent Occasion, viz. GOD's Permission of Errors in the World, for the Trial of his People, nine proper

Causes of Errors found in the evil Dispositions of Men, which prepare them to receive erroneous Doctrines, viz.

1. A WRANGLING Humour at the pretended Obscurity of Scripture.
2. THE Abuse of that Christian Liberty purchased by *Christ*.
3. SLOTHFULNESS in searching the whole Word of GOD.
4. FICKLENESS and Instability of Judgment.
5. EAGERNESS after Anodines to ease a distressed Conscience.
6. AN easy Credulity in following the Judgments and Examples of others.
7. VAIN Curiosity, and prying into unrevealed Secrets.
8. THE Pride and Arrogancy of human Reason.
9. BLIND Zeal, which spurs on the Soul, and runs it upon dangerous Precipices.

WE come next to consider the principal impulsive Cause of Errors, which is *Satan* working upon the pre-disposed Matter he finds in the corrupt Nature of Man.

*SATAN* is a Lyar from the Beginning, and abode not in the Truth: He hates it with a deadly Hatred, and all the Children and Friends of Truth. And this Hatred he manifesteth sometimes by raising furious Storms of Persecution against the sincere



cere Professors of it, *Rev. iii. 10.* and sometimes by Clouds of Heresies and Errors, with Design to darken it. In the former he acts as a roaring Lyon; in the latter as a subtle Serpent, *2 Cor. xi. 3.* *I fear lest as the Serpent beguiled Eve through his Subtilty; so your Minds should be corrupted from the Simplicity that is in Christ.*

HE is exceeding skilful and dexterous in citing and wresting the Scriptures to serve his vile Designs; and as impudently daring, as he is crafty and cunning; as appears in the History of *Christ's* Temptation in the Desart, *Matt. iv. 6.* where he cites one Part of that Promise, *Psal. xci. 11.* and suppresseth the rest; shows the Encouragement, *viz. He shall give his Angels Charge over Thee;* but clips off the Limitation of it, *viz. to keep thee in all thy Ways: In viis, non in præcipitiis,* In our lawful Ways, not in rash and dangerous Precipices; as *Bernard* well glosseth:

AND it is worth Observation, that he introduceth Multitudes of Errors into the World, under the unsuspected Notions of approved Preservatives from all Mischiefs and Dangers from himself. Under this Notion, he hath neatly and covertly slid into the World, *Holy water, Crossings, Reliques of Saints,* and almost innumerable other superstitious Rites.

ERRONEOUS Teachers are the Ministers of *Satan*, however they transform themselves into Ministers of Righteousness, and the subtil dangerous Errors they broach, are fitly stiled by the Spirit of *GOD*, *τὰ βάθη τοῦ Σατανᾶ, the Depths of Satan, Rev. ii. 24.* The corrupt Teachers, the *Gnosticks*, &c. called them Depths, *i. e.* great Mysteries, high and marvellous Attainments in Knowledge; but

the Spirit of GOD fits a very proper Epithet to them, they are Satanical Depths, and Mysteries of Iniquity. Now the Design of *Satan* herein is double:

*First*, HE aims at the Ruin and Damnation of those that vent and propagate them; upon which Account the Apostle calls them, 2 *Pet.* ii. 2. destructive, or (as we render it) damnable Heresies. And because GOD will preserve the Souls of his own from this mortal Contagion, therefore,

*Secondly*, HE endeavours by lesser Errors to busy the Minds, and check the Growth of Grace in the Souls of the Saints, by employing them about Things so foreign to true Godliness, and the Power thereof.

THE Rules for Prevention and Recovery, are these that follow:

1. PRAY earnestly for a thorough Change of the State and Temper of thy Soul, by sound Conversion and Regeneration.

CONVERSION turns us from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of *Satan* to GOD. They are His own Slaves and Vassals that are taken captive by Him at His Will. A sanctified Heart is a sovereign Defensative against erroneous Doctrines; it furnishes the Soul with spiritual Eyes, judicious Ears, and a distinguishing Taste, by which it may discern both Good and Evil, Truth and Error; yea, it puts the Soul at once under the Conduct of the Spirit, and Protection of the Promise, *Joh.* xvi. 13. and though this doth not secure a Man from all lesser Mistakes, yet it effectually se-

cures

cures him from those greater ones, which are inconsistent with Salvation.

1. ACQUAINT yourselves with the Wiles and Methods of *Satan*, and be not ignorant of his Devices.

2. WHEN once you understand the Paint with which he sets off the ugly Face of Error, you will not easily be enamoured with it. Pretences of Devotion upon one Side, and of Purity, Zeal, and Reformation upon the other; are pleasant Sounds to both Ears; yet the wary Soul will examine, before it receive Doctrinal Points under these gilded Titles. Those that have made their Observations upon the Stratagems of *Satan*, will heedfully observe both the Tendency of Doctrines, and the Lives of their Teachers; and if they find Looseness, Pride, Wantonness in them, it is not a glorious Title, or magnificent Name that shall charm them. They know *Satan* can transform himself into an Angel of Light; and no Wonder if his Ministers also be transformed into Ministers of Righteousness.

3. RESIGN your Minds and Judgments in fervent Prayer to the Government of *Christ*, and Conduct of the Spirit; and in all your Addresses to God, pray that He would keep them chaste and pure, and not suffer *Satan* to commit a Rape upon them. Plead with God that Part of *Christ's* Prayer, *John xvii. 17. Sanctify them through Thy Truth: Thy Word is Truth.*

4. LIVE in the consciencious and constant Practice of all those Truths and Duties God hath already manifested to you.



THIS will bring you under that blessed Promise of *Christ*, John vii. 17. *If any Man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God.* Satan's greatest Successes are amongst Idle, notional, and vain Professors; not humble, serious, and practical Christians.

HAVING considered the several internal Causes of Error, found in the evil Dispositions of the seduced, as also the impulsive Cause, viz. *Satan*, who fits suitable Baits to all these evil Tempers; we come next to consider the instrumental Cause employed by *Satan* in this Work, viz. the *False Teacher*, whom *Satan* makes Use of as his Seeds-man, to scatter erroneous Doctrines into the Minds of Men, plowed up and prepared by those evil Tempers, as a fit Soil to receive them.

THE Choice of Instruments is a principal Part of *Satan's* Policy. Every one is not fit to be employed in such a Service as this. All are not fit to be of the Council of War, who yet take their Places of Service in the Field. A Rustick carried out of the Field, on Board a Ship at Sea, tho' he never learned his Compass, nor saw a Ship before, can by another's Direction tug lustily at a Rope; but he had need be an expert Artist, that sits at the Helm, and steers the Course. The worst Causes need the smoothest Orators; and a bad Ware a cunning Merchant to put it off.

DEEP Men are coveted by *Satan* to manage this Design. None like an eloquent *Tertullus* to confront a *Paul*. A subtle *Eccius* to enter the List in Defence of the Popish Cause, against the learned and zealous Reformers. When the Duke of *Buckingham* undertook to plead the bad Cause of King *Richard* the Third, the *Londoners* said, *They never thought*

thought it had been possible for any Man to deliver so much bad Matter, in such good Words.

THE first Instrument chosen by Satan to deceive Man, was the Serpent; because that Creature was more subtle than any Beast of the Field. There is not a Man of eminent Parts, but Satan courts and solicites him for his Service. St. Austin told an ingenious Scholar, *The Devil courts thy Parts to adorn his Cause.* He surveys the World, and wherever he finds more than ordinary Strength of Reason, Pregnancy of Wit, Depth of Learning, and Elegancy of Language, that is the Man he looks for.

THERE is (saith a late Worthy) an *erudita nequitia*, a learned Kind of Wickedness, a subtle Art of deceiving the Minds of others. Upon which Account the Spirit of God sometimes compares them, 2 Pet. ii. 3. to cunning and cheating Tradesmen, who have the Art to set a Gloss upon their bad Wares with fine Words, *πλαιοῖς λόγοις ὑμᾶς ἐπαγορεύονταί*, they buy and sell the People with their ensnaring and feigned Words. And sometimes he compares them to cunning Gamesters, that have the Art and Slight of Hand to cog the Die, to deceive the unskilful, and win their Game, Eph. iv. 14. *ἐν τῇ αὐτοψίᾳ.*

AND sometimes the Spirit of God compares them to Witches themselves, Gal. iii. 1. *foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?* How many strange Feats have been done upon the Bodies of Men and Women by Witchcraft? But far more and more stranger upon the Souls of Men by the Magick of Error. *Jannes and Jambres* performed wonderful Things in the Sight of *Pharaoh*, by which they deceived and hardened him; and unto these, false Teachers are compared.

THE proper Remedies in this Case are principally two.

I. PRAY fervently, and labour diligently in the Use of all God's appointed Means to get more Solidity of Judgment, and Strength of Grace to establish you in the Truth, and secure your Souls against the Craftiness of Men that lie in Wait to deceive.

It is the Ignorance and Weakness of the People, which makes the Factors for Errors so successful as they are. Consult the Scripture, and you shall find these cunning Merchants drive the quickest and gainfullest Trade among the weak and injudicious. So speaks the Apostle, *With good Words and fair Speeches they deceive the Hearts of the simple*; harmless, weak, easy Souls, who have a Desire to do well, but want Wisdom to discern the Subtilties of them that mean ill; who are void both of Fraud in themselves, and Suspicion of others. Oh! what Success have the Deceivers, *χρησολογία καὶ ὑπολογία*, their fair Words and sugared Speeches, sweet and taking Expressions, among such innocent ones!

AND who are they among whom Satan's cunning Gamesters commonly win, but weak Christians, credulous Souls, whom for that Reason the Apostle call *νήπιοι*, Children. The Word properly signifies an Infant, when it is referred to the Age; but unskilful and unlearned, when referred (as it is here) to the Mind. So again, 2 Pet. ii. 14. They (that is, the false Teachers there spoken of) beguile *ψυχὰς ἀσθελεῖς*, unstable Souls, Souls that are not confirmed and grounded in the Principles of Religion. Whence by the Way, take Notice of the unspeakable Advantage and Necessity of being well cate-



catechized in our Youth : The more judicious, the more secure.

2. LABOUR to acquaint yourselves with the Sleights and Artifices *Satan's* Factors and Instruments generally make Use of, to seduce and draw Men from the Truth. The Knowledge of them is a good Defensative against them.

Now there are two common Artifices of Seducers, which is not safe for Christians to be ignorant of.

*First*, THEY usually seek to disgrace and blast the Reputations of those Truths, and Ministers set for their Defence, which they design afterwards to overthrow ; and to beget a Reputation to those Errors which they have a Mind to introduce, How many precious Truths of GOD are this Day, and with this Design defamed as legal and carnal Doctrines ; and those that defend them as Men of an Old Testament Spirit ?

HUMILIATION for Sin, and Contrition of Spirit, fall under Disgrace with many, and indeed all Qualifications and Pre-requisites unto coming to *Christ*, as Things not only needless, but pernicious unto the Souls of Men, although they have not the least Dependence upon them.

AND so for the Persons of Orthodox Ministers ; you see into what Contempt the false Teachers would have brought both the Person and Preaching of *Paul* himself, 2 Cor. x. 10. *His bodily Presence* (say they) *is weak, and his Speech contemptible.*

*Secondly*, THEIR other common Artifice is, to insinuate their false Doctrines among many acknowledged

ledged and precious Truths, which only serve as a convenient Vehicle to them; and besides that, to make their Errors as palatable as they can to the vitiated Appetite of corrupt Nature.

HAVING considered the several Causes of Errors, found in the evil Dispositions of the seduced, as also the impulsive and instrumental Causes, namely *Satan* and false Teachers employed by him; I shall next proceed to discover some special, and most successful Methods frequently used by them, to draw the Minds of Men from the Truth. Amongst which, one is the great Skill they have in representing the *Abuses* of the Ordinances of GOD, and Duties of Religion, by wicked Men, to scare tender and weak Consciences from the due Use of them.

THE Abuse of *Christ's* holy Appointments are so cunningly improved to serve this Design, that the Minds of many well-meaning Persons receive such deep Disgust at them, that they are scarce ever to be reconciled to them again. A strong Prejudice is apt to drive Men from one Extream to another, as thinking they can never get far enough off from that which hath been so represented to them. Thus making good the old Observation, *Dum vitant fluit vitia, in contraria currunt*; they run from the troublesome Smoak of Superstition, into the Fire of an irreligious Contempt of GOD's Ordinances, split themselves upon *Charybdis* to avoid *Scylla*.

THUS the Papists have deeply abused the Ordinance of Baptism, by their corrupt Mixtures and Additions: And Multitudes of carnal Protestants dangerously resting upon their supposed baptismal Regeneration, to the great Hazard of their Salvation. They take from hence such deep Offence at  
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the Administration of it to any Infants at all (though the Seed of GOD's covenanted People) that they think they can never be sharp enough in their Invectives against it; nor have they Patience to hear the most rational Defences of that Practice.

So, for that Scriptural Heavenly Duty of Singing: What more commonly alledged against it, than the Abuse of that precious Ordinance? How often is the Nonsense of the common Translation, the Rudeness and Dulness of the Metre of some Psalms, as also the Formality, with which that Ordinance is performed by many? I say, How often are these Things buzzed into the Ears of the People, to alienate their Hearts from so sweet and beneficial a Duty?

If Satan can prevail first with wicked Men, to corrupt and abuse GOD's Ordinances; and then with good Men to renounce and slight them for the Sake of those Abuses; he fully obtains his Design, and gives *Christ* a double Wound at once; one by the Hand of his avowed Enemies, the other by the Hands of his Friends. First, wicked Men corrupt *Christ's* Ordinances; and then good Men nauseate them.

THE proper Remedies against Errors, grounded on the Abuses of Duties and Ordinances, are such as follow:

I. LET Men consider, that there is Nothing in Religion so great, so sacred and excellent, but some or other have greatly corrupted or vilely abused them.

WHAT is there in the whole World more precious and excellent than the Free-grace of GOD?  
And



And yet you read, *Jude* iv. of some that turned this Grace into Lasciviousness. What more desirable to Christians, than the glorious Liberty *Christ* hath purchased for them by his Blood, and settled upon them in the Gospel-charter? A Liberty from *Satan*, Sin, and the Curse of the Law; and you read, *1 Pet.* ii. 16. of them that used this Liberty for a Cloak of Maliciousness. It is true *Christ* came to be a Sacrifice for Sin; to set us at Liberty from the Bondage of our Lusts, not from the Ties and Duties of our Obedience. Under the Pretence of this Liberty it was, that the *Gnosticks*, and *Menandrians* of old, did not only connive at, but openly taught and practised all Manner of Lewdness and Uncleanness.

*St. Augustine*, in his Book of Heresy, makes this sad Complaint, the *Menandrians* willingly embrace all Uncleanness as the Fruit of the Grace of *God* towards Men. And not only the Liberty purchased by *Christ*, but the very Person and Gospel of *Christ* are liable to Abuses; and often through the Corruptions of Mens Hearts, become Stones of Stumbling, and Rocks of Offence. What then? Shall we renounce the Grace of *God*, our Christian Liberty, the very Gospel, yea, and Person of *Christ* Himself, because each of them have been thus vilely abused by wicked Wretches? At the Peril of our eternal Damnation be it, if we do so. *Blessed is he* (saith our *LORD*) *that is not offended in me.* Beware, lest by this Means *Satan* at once wound the *LORD Jesus Christ* by Scandal, and thy Soul by Prejudice.

2. CONSIDER also, that it is the Nature and Temper of a gracious Soul, to raise his Esteem, and heighten his Love to those Ordinances which are most abused and disgraced by Men.

THE more they are abused and opposed by others, the higher they should be valued and honoured by us; *Psal. cxix. 126, 127. It is Time for Thee, O LORD, to work, for they have made void thy Law; therefore I love thy Commandments above Gold, yea, above fine Gold, q. d.* The more they are disgraced and abused by wicked Men, the more do I honour and prize them. A like Spirit, with David's, was found in *Elijah, 1 Kings xix. 14. I have been very jealous for the LORD GOD of Hosts; because the Children of Israel have forsaken thy Covenant, thrown down thine Altars, and slain thy Prophets with the Sword.*

A GOOD Man will strive to honour and secure those Truths and Duties most, which he finds under most Disgrace or Danger. He loves the Truth sincerely, who cleaves to it, and stands by it under all Opposition. This is a good Trial of the Soundness of thy Heart, and Purity of thine Ends in Religion: Such a Proof, as the Honour and Reputation of Religion in the World can never give thee.

3. BEFORE you part with any Ordinance or Practice in Religion, think whether you never found any spiritual Blessings or Advantages in that Path which you are now tempted to forsake.

HAD you never any spiritual Meltings of your Hearts and Affections in that Heavenly Ordinance of Singing? And may there not be now Thousands of Mercies in your Possession in Consequence to, and as the Fruit of your solemn Dedication to GOD in *Baptism* by your covenanted Parents? For my own Part, I do heartily and solemnly bless GOD for it upon this Account; and so I hope Thousands besides myself have Cause to do. However,

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such a Practice may by no Means be deserted by you, because abused by others.

FROM all that hath been said about Errors, we see in the first Place, the great Necessity of an able, faithful, standing Ministry in the Church.

ONE special End of the Ministry, is the Establishment of the Peoples Souls against the Errors of the Times, *Eph. iv. 11, 14. He gave some Apostles, &c. that we henceforth be no more Children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every Wind of Doctrine by the Sleight of Men.* Ministers are Shepherds, and without a Shepherd, how soon will the Flock go astray? *Moses* was absent but a few Days from the *Israelites*, and at his Return found them all run into the Snares of Idolatry. A Sheep is *animal Sequax*, a Creature that follows a Leader. One Stragler may mislead a whole Flock. A Minister's Work is not only to feed, but to defend the Flock. *I am set (saith Paul) for the Defence of the Gospel, Phil. i. 17.* An orthodox and faithful Minister, is a double Blessing to the People; but Woe to that People, whose Ministers, instead of securing them against Errors, cause them to err, *Isa. ix. 16.* they are the Dogs of the Flock. Some in Scripture are called dumb Dogs, who, instead of barking at the Thief, bite the Children: But faithful Ministers give Warning of spiritual Dangers.

2. FROM the manifold Causes and Mischiefs of Errors before-mentioned, we may also see what a choice Mercy it is to be kept sound in Judgment, stedfast and unmovable in the Truths and Ways of *Christ*. A sound and stedfast Christian is a Blessing in his Generation, and a Glory to his Profession. It was an high Encomium of *Athanasius*, *Se-*  
*dem*



*dem maluit mutare, quam syllabam*: He would rather lose his Seat, than a Syllable of God's Truth. Soundness of Judgment must needs be a choice Blessing; because the Understanding is that leading Faculty which directs the Will and Conscience of Man, and they his whole Life and Practice. How often and how earnestly doth *Christ* pray for his People, that they may be kept in the Truth? It is true, Orthodoxy in itself is not sufficient to any Man's Salvation; but the Conjunction of an orthodox Head, with an honest Heart, does constitute an excellent Christian.

3. By this Discourse we may further discover one great and special Cause and Reason of the lamentable Decay of the Spirit and Power of Religion, amongst the Professors of the present Age.

It is a Complaint more just than common, That *we do all fade as a Leaf*. And what may be the Cause? Nothing more probable than the Wasting of our Time and Spirits in vain Janglings and fruitless Controversies, which the Apostle tells us, *Heb. xiii. 9.* have not profitted, *i. e.* they have greatly injured them that have been occupied therein. Many Controversies of these Times grow up about Religion, as Suckers from the Root and Limbs of a Fruit-tree, which spend the vital Sap that should make it fruitful.

It is a great and sad Observation made upon the State of *England* by some judicious Persons, That after the greatest Increase of Religion, both intensively in the Power of it, and extensively in the Number of Converts, what a remarkable Decay it suffered both Ways, when about the Year Forty-four, Controversies and Disputations grew fervent

vent among Professors. Since that Time our Strength and Glory have very much abated.

4. FROM this Discourse we may also gather, the true Grounds and Reasons of those frequent Persecutions which GOD lets in upon his Churches and People: These rank Weeds call for snowy and frosty Weather to subdue and kill them.

I KNOW the Enemies of GOD's People aim at Something else: They strike at Religion itself; and according to their Intention, without timely Repentance, will their Reward be; the Issues of Persecution are upon this Account greatly beneficial to the Church; the Wisdom of GOD makes them excellently useful, both to prevent and cure the Mischiefs and Dangers of Errors. If Enemies were not, Friends and Brethren would be injurious to each other. Persecution, if it kills not, yet at least it gives Check to the Rise and Growth of Errors: And if it do not perfectly unite the Hearts of Christians, yet to be sure it cools and allays their sinful Heats; and that two Ways: (1) By cutting out for them far better and more necessary Work. Now instead of racking their Brains about unnecessary Controversies, they find it high Time to be searching their Hearts, and examining the Foundations of their Faith and Hope, with Respect to the other World. (2) Moreover, such Times and Straits, discover the Sincerity, Zeal and Constancy of them we were jealous of, or prejudiced against before, because they followed not us.

*Lastly*, LET us learn hence, both the Duty and Necessity of Charity and mutual Forbearance; we have all our Mistakes one Way or other, and therefore must maintain mutual Charity under Dissents in Judgment.

AND

AND yet an erring Brother must be reduced if possible, and that by sharp Rebukes too, if gentler Essays be ineffectual, *Tit. i. 13.* and the Wounds of a Friend have more faithful Love in them, than the Kisses of an Enemy: And if GOD make us instrumental by that or any other Method, to recover a Brother from the Error of his Way, he will have great Cause, both to bless GOD, and thank the Instrument, who thereby saves a Soul from Death, and hides a Multitude of Sins, *James v. 20.*

**End of Mr. Flavel's WORKS.**





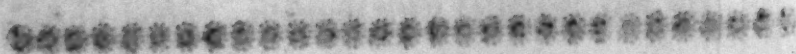
# EXTRACTS

And yet according to the doctrine of the Unitarians, and that by their Religious Test, it is not possible to be initiated, &c. i. e. and the friends of a Friend have more bidding than is there, that the Kites of an **HEROM** if God will be instrumental by that or any other method to receive a Brother from the Error of his Way, he will have great Cause, both to bless God, and thank the Instrument, who thereby gives a Soul from Darkness and a new birth.

**DR. WATKINS**

LONDON 1746

## SERMONS



**EXTRACTS**

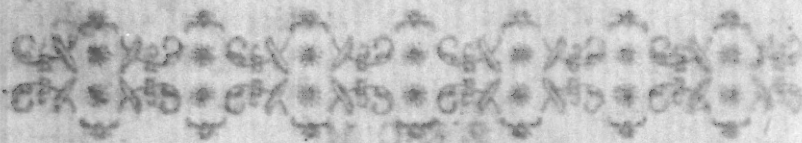
**FROM**

**Dr. *ANNESLEY*'s**

**SERMONS.**



# EXTRACTS



## PERMONI

God's Sovereignty our Support

in all our labors



PSALM XCIII. 1, 2.

The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoice  
the multitude of the Isles be glad thereof.  
Clouds and Darkness are round about Him  
Righteousness and Judgment are the Habitation of his Throne.

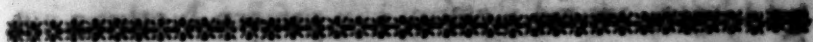
THE State of Affairs is often so involved  
and confused, that we need not wonder  
if we see Men of Wisdom greatly per-  
plexed and distressed. The best of Men  
whose Hearts are most fortified with Grace, would  
be of all others most subject to Discomposure, were  
it not that they feel Peace and Comfort flowing into  
them from the Remembrance and sweet Consideration





# S E R M O N I.

*GOD's Sovereignty our Support  
in all worldly Distractions.*



PSALM xcvi. 1, 2.

*The LORD reigneth, let the Earth rejoice, let  
the Multitude of the Isles be glad thereof.  
Clouds and Darknes are round about Him,  
Righteousness and Judgment are the Habita-  
tion of his Throne.*

THE State of Affairs is often so involved  
and confused, that we need not wonder  
if we see Men of Wisdom greatly per-  
plexed in their Spirits, and almost sunk  
into Discouragement. The best of Men,  
whose Hearts are most fortified with Grace, would  
be of all others most subject to Discomposure, were  
it not that they feel Peace and Comfort flowing into  
them from the Remembrance and sweet Considera-  
tion

tion of a God above. What good Man could have any tolerable Enjoyment of himself, or possess his Soul in Patience, while he observes the irregular Motions of Things below, the Restlessness, Tumblings and Tossings of the World, desirable Comforts and Delights blasted in a Moment, Afflictions and Troubles breaking in with a sudden Surprize, Order quite subverted, Laws violated, and the Edge of them turned against those that are faithful and peaceable in a Land, and all Things indeed turned upside down, Wickedness rampant, and Religion oppressed: These Things would soon break his Heart, did he not see Him who is invisible, and firmly believe a Wheel within a Wheel, an unseen Hand, which steadily and prudently guides and directs all Things, keeping up a beautiful Order, where Reason can discern Nothing but Confusion.

THOSE that are conversant in the sacred Scriptures, find, that the flourishing State of ungodly Men, and the afflicted Condition of the Good, hath proved to some of the Saints so hard a Knot, as they have gone to God for the Untying of it, and to others it hath been the Occasion of furious and violent Temptations. Upon that very Score holy *Asaph* was almost ready to conclude, he had in vain cleansed his Heart, and washed his Hands in Innocence.

BUT if we will repair unto the Sanctuary, and consult the Divine Oracles, and believe them when they tell us that the eternal God, our God is the Governor of the World, it will revive our Spirits, reduce our Souls into their right Frame, and preserve them in a due Composure, when the Scene of Affairs is most ruffled. To entertain you with a Discourse upon this seasonable Subject is the Work allotted

allotted me at this Time, and the Question now to be answered is this:

*How may our Belief of GOD's Governing the World support us in all worldly Distractions?*

THE Text which I have now read is the precious and sure Foundation, on which I am to build; in that we find these Things observable:

I. A COMFORTABLE Assertion; *the LORD reigneth, i. e. JEHOVAH, GOD, or if you please, our LORD Jesus Christ, unto whom all Power is given both in Heaven and in Earth;* for that He is particularly intended in this Psalm, may be gathered from Verse 7. *Confounded be all they that serve graven Images, and boast themselves of their Idols; worship Him all ye Gods;* which last Words relate to Christ, as the Apostle Paul assures us, *Heb. i. 6. When He bringeth in the First-begotten into the World, He saith, let all the Angels of GOD worship Him.*

2. HERE is an Exhortation to Joy and Gladness upon Account of the LORD's Reigning. *Let the Earth rejoice, and let the Multitudes of the Isles be glad thereof. i. e. Let all the World rejoice,* at least all that are Subjects to this Mighty LORD, who have bowed to his Scepter, and submitted themselves to his Government, as *a willing People in the Day of his Power.* Christ was the Desire of all Nations; and there is Reason why He and his Government should be the Delight of all Nations. Both those in the Earth, by which some understand the Continent, and those of the Isles, or if you please, you may understand the Gentiles, because that Passage of the Prophet, *Isaiah xlii. 4. The Isles shall*



*shall wait for his Law, is by the Evangelist rendered thus, Matt. xii. 21. In his Name shall the Gentiles trust.*

3. WE have here the Manner how the LORD manageth his Government; and that is laid down in two Things:

*First, WITH terrible Majesty and Mysteriousness: This you have in the former Part of the second Verse; Clouds and Darknes are round about Him: Which Words intimate to us the tremendous Majesty of the LORD, which may well strike an Awe upon his Subjects and Friends, and much more fill his Enemies with Dread and Horror. He was terrible at his giving forth the fiery Law upon Mount Sinai. As we read, Deut. xi. 4. The Mountain burnt with Fire unto the Midst of Heaven with Darknes, Clouds, and thick Darknes. So He is and will be still in his future Appearance and Dispensations; for his Fan is in his Hand, and He will thoroughly purge his Floor, and gather his Wheat into the Garner, but burn up the Chaff with unquenchable Fire.*

AND as these Clouds and Darknes signify the terrible Majesty, so the Mysteriousness of his Proceedings. He often goeth so much out of our Sight, that we are unable to give an Account of what He doth or what He is about to do. Frequently the Pillar of Divine Providence is dark throughout, to *Israelites* as well as *Aegyptians*, so that his own People understand not the Riddles, 'till He is pleased to be his own Interpreter, *Psalms lxxvii. 19. His Way is in the Sea, and his Path in the great Waters, and his Footsteps are not known.*

**YET** the LORD manageth his Government with perfect Equity and unspotted Justice. *Righteousness and Judgment are the Habitation of his Throne.* Righteousness, whereby He preserves, saves and rewards the Good; Judgment, whereby He punishes, confounds and destroys the Wicked. These are the Habitation of his Throne, his Tribunal, his Seat of Judicature. These are the Basis or Foundation, which give unto his Throne Rectitude and Establishment. *His Throne is established in Righteousness, and the Scepter of his Kingdom is a right Scepter.* Though there be Clouds, yet no Blemishes; though Darkness, yet no Deformities. *Psalms xcii. 15. The LORD is upright, He is our Rock, there is no Unrighteousness in Him.* The Doctrine I shall speak to is this:

In the Midst of all outward Distractions and Confusions, GOD's Governing the World may and should be our Support and Joy. In the Handling thereof I shall observe this Method.

1. ENQUIRE what Government is.
2. PROVE that GOD doth govern the World.
3. SHEW why this should support and comfort his People.
4. IMPROVE the Whole in a Way of Use.

I BEGIN with the First of these.

GOVERNMENT is the exerting that Power which any one is justly clothed with, for the ordering and directing of Persons and Things to their right and proper Ends.

IN this Description of Government are three Things to be considered.

1. IN all Government there is an End fixed and aimed at. Thus it is in Domestick or Family Government, which Parents have over their Children by Nature, and Masters over their Servants by Contract. The End of that Government is the Good of the Family, and every one that is a Member thereof. The Parent or Master ought not to aim solely at his own Honour, Pleasure and Advantage; but to desire, study, and by all lawful Means to promote the Good of the Whole. And just so it is with political Government, both in Cities and Provinces, and Kingdoms or Empires. When People did at first constitute such or such a Form of Government, and place one or more at the Helm, no rational Man can doubt, but it was for some wise End; which End is either supreme and ultimate, or inferior and subordinate.

THE supreme and ultimate End, ought to be the Glory of GOD, the exalting his Name, the maintaining and promoting Religion and Godliness. None can shoot at a fairer Mark; this is worthy of Men, of the best and greatest Men: It is the great End which GOD Himself aims at in the Works of his Hands: He both made all Things for Himself, and for Himself likewise He doth uphold and order them. And unto this End all Magistrates are in Duty bound to direct their Rule and all their Actions. This is the great Work of their Place, the main Business of their Office. The good LORD give them all an Heart to consider it, and to act accordingly! As they rule by GOD, so they are obliged to rule for Him; they ought not to design the lifting up of themselves, but the lifting up the Name of GOD and *Christ* in the World, especially in



in their own Dominions. That Magiſtrate who doth not make the Glory of God his principal End, is himſelf degenerated into a Beaſt.

THE ſubordinate End is the Good of the Communities, the Welfare of the whole Country, the Peace, Comfort and Proſperity of all the People, over whom Governors are ſet. The ſupreme Magiſtrate is to his Dominions what the Head is to the Body natural, and ſo Influence belongs to Him as well as Pre-eminence; he is engaged to think, contrive, order and provide for the Comfort of the Body, and all the Members of it. *He is the Miniſter of GOD to thee for Good*, even for a four-fold Good.

(1) FOR natural Good, that he may ſecure thy Perſon and Life from Danger, and thy outward Liberty, Comforts and Enjoyments from the Sons of Violence.

(2) FOR moral Good, that he may curb thy unruly Paſſions, and hinder them from breaking out into vicious and enormous Practices.

(3) FOR civil Good, that he may preſerve publick Society, and keep up common Honesty and Juſtice.

(4) FOR ſpiritual Good, that he may defend the true Religion, that which is pure and undefiled before GOD and the Father, and encourage the Worſhip of GOD, which is warranted by the Scripture. And all this is according to the Word, which doth command that *we ſhould pray for Kings, and all that are in Authority, that under them we might lead peaceable and quiet Lives, in all Godlineſs and Honesty*. So that the End of Government is

the securing Peace and Quietness, and the encouraging Honesty and Godliness.

2. IN all Government there is supposed a Power sufficient for the ordering Things unto these Ends: Not only natural Power, but also lawful Authority; for without that there can be no just, right and good Government. Magistrates therefore are called Powers, Rom. xiii. 1. *Let every Soul be subject to the higher Powers; for there is no Power but of GOD; the Powers that be are ordained by GOD.* Lawful Governors are invested with Authority and Power; there are put into their Hands the Scepter to rule, and the Sword to punish as there is Cause. They have a legislative Power, to make Laws, which shall oblige their Subjects; they have a Right to do this, and Obedience is due from their People, Obedience to all their just and lawful Commands; they ought to rule in the Fear of GOD, and their Subjects ought to obey in the Fear of GOD, Rom. xiii. 5. *Ye must needs be subject, and that not only for Wrath, but also for Conscience Sake, as knowing that this is the Will of GOD concerning you.* And as there is an Authority to enact Laws, so a Power to suppress the Rebellious, and animadvert on those that are refractory and stubborn, and also to defend, reward and encourage all who perform their Duty. Where this Power is not, there is a miserable Defect in the Government, which will in Time come to Nothing, and Confusion and every evil Work step up in its Place.

3. IN Government this Power is reduced into Act; there is a seasonable exerting the Power in order to the attaining these Ends. This is the Complement of all; for that Power is vain, which always lies dormant. Power is not put into the Ruler's Hand merely for Ornament, but for Use.

It is as a Candle in the socket many among the Heathens

It is no other than a Trust committed to him; therefore though he be a Magistrate over Men, yet he is a Minister of GOD, and is obliged to serve his great LORD according to the best of his Skill, toward the End above-mentioned. As he is advanced to an high and honourable Place, so he is engaged to a great and excellent Work. *Rom. xiii. 4.* *He is not to bear the Sword in vain;* and it may be said, He weareth not the Crown in vain; not for a mere Shew, an empty Pageantry, but for a good End, for excellent and noble Purposes. The Sword committed to him must be drawn against the Enemies of GOD, and Truth, and Holiness; he must be an Avenger to execute Wrath, not upon the Pious and Peaceable, but upon them that do Evil. Thus have I shewed you what Government is, *viz.* Using of lawful Power for excellent Ends.

THE second Thing propounded was to prove, that GOD doth govern the World. As He made it at first, so He doth still uphold and order it. In a Nation you know there are many inferior Magistrates, yet it followeth not but the King is supreme, who authorizeth, influences, directs and limits them by his Laws. There are upon Earth many Governors, various Forms of Government, yea the Angels in Heaven are ministring Spirits, employed in special and weighty Matters. But all of them are set up and sent forth by GOD, and fulfill his Pleasure. GOD Himself sits at the Helm, and steers the Course, He over-rules and orders all from the Highest to the Lowest. For the evidencing hereof take these following Particulars:

*First,* THE Light of Nature hath discovered this, and by the Glimmering thereof (though it burn dimly as a Candle in the Socket) many among the



Heathens have been led to the Knowledge of it. It must be granted that they were exceedingly in the Dark, differing much one from another in their Sentiments about GOD and his Providence. Some were of Opinion, that GOD doth not attend to the meaner and inferior Creatures, nor take Cognizance of small inconsiderable Matters, but only of the grand Concernments of Mankind. Some did again assert, that GOD cared for all Things; but it was only in a Way of common general Influences, and by second Causes, doing Nothing immediately and by Himself. Others again on the contrary Side did affirm, that GOD doth immediately and by Himself so work All in All, that they left almost no Place for second Causes. Thus were they divided among themselves, having their Understandings miserably darkened. But many among the Heathens, yea their most learned Men, did own the Divine Providence and Government. Hence it is that they call GOD the Rector and Keeper of the World; the Soul and Spirit of the World; and do expressly compare him to the Soul in the Body, and to the Master in a Ship, who doth command, rule, direct, steer and turn it what Way and to what Port he himself thinks good. But,

*Secondly,* THE Sacred Scriptures abound with Testimonies, which may afford us full Satisfaction in the Point. When He was about to punish the World for the Wickedness of them that dwelt therein, and to sweep away the Inhabitants of it with a Flood, He took Care that all Mankind should not be destroyed: But *Noah* and his Family were preserved, yea and some of all the Species of Animals too, that so Seed might be continued upon Earth, and that in the ordinary Way of Generation, which was an eminent Instance of Divine Providence, and its ordering and governing the

World. Besides that, attend to these Passages of Scripture, *Job v. 9. GOD doth great Things and unsearchable, marvellous Things without Number: He giveth Rain, sends Waters, sets up on high those that be low, disappoints the Devices of the Crafty, taking them in their own Craftiness, carrying the Counsel of the Forward head-long. Isaiah xlv. 5, 7. I am the LORD, and there is none else; I form the Light and create Darkness, I make Peace and create Evil, I the LORD do all these Things. Psal. xxxiv. 16, 17. The Face of the LORD is against them that do Evil, to cut off the Remembrance of them from the Earth: The Righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their Distresses. Eph. i. 11. He worketh all Things according to the Counsel of his own Will. Not only some Things, which are momentous and stupendous, such as strike Men with Wonder and Amazement, but all Things are of GOD, and not according to the Will and Pleasure of others, but according to his own eternal Counsel, Dan. iv. 34, 35. His Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, and his Kingdom is from Generation to Generation, and all the Inhabitants of the Earth are accounted as Nothing, and He doth according to his Will in the Armies of Heaven, and all the Inhabitants of the Earth, who are counted as Nothing, and none can stay his Hand, or say unto Him, what dost Thou? Matt. x. 29. Are not two Sparrows sold for a Farthing, and one of them shall not fall to the Ground without your heavenly Father. Scriptures to this Purpose might be multiplied, I will add but one more, *Psalm ciii. 19. The LORD hath prepared his Throne in Heaven, and his Kingdom ruleth over All. But,**

*Thirdly, GOD hath an unquestionable Right to govern the World; it doth properly appertain unto Him. The Belief and Acknowledgment hereof doth*

doth necessarily follow upon the owning of a God. To own such a Being, and yet to deny or question his Right to govern, is a gross Absurdity.

THAT Being which we call God, is the first, highest, noblest, and most excellent Being of all; infinite and unchangeable in all Perfections, and therefore He hath a Right to order others that are not so. Man is endued with Reason and Understanding, and so is the most excellent Creature in this lower World; therefore it pleased his great Creator to put the Lordship into his Hand, and to give him *Dominion over every living Thing that moveth upon the Earth*. How much more then is an absolute and universal Rule due to GOD, whose Understanding is infinite, and in whom are all the inexhaustible, unfathomable Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge. Besides that, consider God is the Fountain of Being, the first Cause and Original of all Being. The World and all Things in it are the Works of his Hands. He made them and fashioned them; and seeing He made all, seeing by his Power and for his Pleasure all Things are and were created, it is highly reasonable that all Things should be ordered, directed, and disposed of according to his Pleasure. Who can be so impudent and brutish, and run so cross to the Dictates of right Reason, as to deny Him a Right to give Laws to them unto whom He gave Life? It is every Way fit, that He from whom all Things had their Being, and to whose Power and Goodness they own their Continuance, should appoint them all their Ends, and direct their Steps, and cast their Lines, and cut out their Works, and over-rule all their Actions.

4. FOR GOD to govern the World is no Dishonour to Him; it doth not the least eclipse his most excellent



excellent Glory. It is true, as I before hinted, though some Men chearfully acknowledged a governing and over-ruling Providence, yet they conceived it extended not its Self to vile and contemptible Creatures, or to minute and inconsiderable Things; judging of Him by earthly Potentates, who take State upon them, and trouble not themselves with any but the more weighty and momentous Affairs of their Dominions, and leave Things of smaller Importance to their inferior Officers.

**BUT** this is not the Manner of the God of *Jacob*, nor doth he count his Care of the meanest and most minute Beings, to be any Reflection upon him. Therefore He expressly tells us, that *the young Lions seek their Meat of God; that He giveth to the Beasts their Food, and to the young Ravens when they cry. He cloaths the Lillies, and Sparrows are not forgotten by Him, not one of them falls to the Ground without Him; the very Hairs of our Head are numbered.*

**AND** what Dishonour can all or any of this be to Him? Is it possible, that his doing so should render Him cheap to the Children of Men? Nay, is it not enough to commend Him to all wise and thinking Persons, that He is so great a God that He can extend his Care to so many Millions of Objects, and so graciously condescending, as to look after the lowest of the Works of his Hands?

**SURELY** since it was not unworthy of his divine Power to make the meanest Creature, it cannot be unworthy of his Goodness to maintain and order it. If his eternal Power and Godhead are clearly seen in the Things that are made, then his Goodness doth likewise display itself in providing for them, and his Wisdom in governing and directing

recting them. It is true, He humbles Himself when He beholds those Things which are above, much more when he regards those Things that are here below ; but that humbling of Himself is a glorifying of Himself, and doth deservedly commend and endear Him to his People, *Psalm xxxvi. 6, 7. O LORD, Thou preservest Man and Beast, how excellent is thy Loving-kindness !*

*Lastly,* OUR GOD is abundant in Mercy and Goodness ; He is the Father of Mercies, and God of Compassions, and as that doth render Him fit to govern the World, so it may work in us an Assurance that He doth and will do it. Shall we fancy Him like the Ostrich, concerning which it is said, *Job xxxix. 14. That she leaveth her Eggs in the Earth, and warmeth them in the Dust, and forgetteth that the Foot may crush them, or that the wild Beasts may break them ; she is hardened against her young ones, as if they were not hers.* Thus to do is utterly inconsistent with the divine Goodness : To fancy such a Thing of God, would be to blaspheme Him ; He hath a Kindness for the Works of his Hands, and that will carry Him to a Caring for them. The World will love its own, and doth not GOD much more ? A good Prince, who is the Father of his Country, and deserves that Name, will to the best of his Skill guide and rule his Kingdom, at the Helm whereof Providence hath placed him, that his own Honour, and his People's Welfare may be secured and promoted. That Man deserves not the Place nor Name of a Master, who neglects to make Provision for his own Family, and keep up Order in it. That is an unnatural Father, unworthy indeed to be called Man, who doth not according to his best Knowledge and Ability, mind his Children and govern them.

Now

Now none is so good as God, none such a Father as GOD, no Love comparable to his Love. All that Love which may be found in the Creatures, is but a Drop from his Ocean, a Spark from his Flame; and as I have said, all the World is his own, and all that is therein the Works of his Hands: He built this huge and stately Fabrick, and furnished it with all its Inhabitants, from the highest and most glorious Angel, to the meanest and most contemptible Insect; and how can we possibly think otherwise, but that the Pity and Love which He hath for the Works of his own Hands, will draw out his Wisdom, and Power and Care for the ruling and directing of them? For any one to deny this Care, nay to hesitate about it, would be a base Disparagement, and Affront to him.

THE third Thing we have to do is to shew how our Belief of GOD's Governing the World may support us in all worldly Distractions; and that we may draw out the Sweetness of this Truth, we must consider these following Particulars:

1. GOD's Accomplishment for the Work.

2. THE Extent of his Government.

3. THE Properties thereof.

4. SEVERAL Things relating to the Church and its Members.

*First*, GOD is most fit and accomplished for this great Work. It is indeed a Business too hard for a Creature's Hand to dispatch, and a Burden too heavy for a created Shoulder to bear up under. To govern the World is a Thing utterly impossible



sible to a created Being, not only to the wisest Man on Earth, but also to the highest Angel in Heaven. None can govern the whole World, but He that created it. Creation is peculiar to God, the greatest Angel cannot create the smallest Spire of Grass. The most minute Drop of Being can proceed only from Him, who is the Original and Fountain of all Being. So the Government of the whole World is peculiar to God, because there is so much Contrariety in it, so many Antipathies. Men have unruly Passions, they interfere in their several Interests, and while they are carrying them on, quarrel and jostle one another, and who but God can order all, and direct them to most noble and excellent Ends? Who but God can take these several scattered Shreds, and unite them together in one curious and amiable Piece of Workmanship? Who but God can take these jarring Discords, and turn them into an admirable and delightful Harmony? That God is perfectly accomplished for the Work, so that He cannot only do it, but the doing thereof will be no Pain nor Trouble to Him, may thus appear:

I. He is an immense Being; *Heaven is his Throne, and the Earth is his Foot-stool.* Those that have many Businesses scattered up and down, must needs suffer some of that Business to lie by neglected, because they themselves are limited Creatures. Some Things may be out of Order under the Government of the most prudent and pious Prince, because he cannot be at once in all Parts of his Dominions: But God is omnipresent, filling Heaven and Earth. *If thou goest up to Heaven He is there; if thou make thy Bed in Hell, behold! He is there; if thou dwellest in the uttermost Parts of the Sea, there shall his Hand lead thee, and his Right-hand shall guide thee.* All Things are within his Reach,

Reach, whereſoever any Thing is doing or to be done, there GOD is; who is preſent in every Place and with every Perſon. He ſtands at our Right-hands, and ſo may well guide them, ſo to do will coſt Him no Travel nor Trouble. *In Him we live, and move, and have our Being*; not at a Diſtance from Him, not out of Him, but in Him.

2. GOD can eaſily govern the World, becauſe of his almighty Power, He is ſtronger than all, his Word is enough to accompliſh all his Will. The wiſeſt of Men are fooliſh Creatures, and the ſtrongeſt are weak. Kingdoms and Nations have frequently proved ungovernable to potent Princes. Such Breaches have been made as they could not heal; ſuch Tempeſts have riſen as they could not lay: But GOD is of infinite Power, as He hath an Arm long enough to reach, ſo ſtrong enough to rule all Things. He binds the Sea with a Girdle, and ſtays its proud Waves, ſaying, *Hither ſhall ye go, and no further. He makes the Wrath of Man to praiſe Him*, tho' it be more boiſterous than the Sea, and the Remainder thereof He ſhall reſtrain. *He hangeth the World upon Nothing. He hath compaſſed the Waters with Bounds: He divideth the Sea with his Power; the Pillars of Heaven tremble, and are aſtoniſhed at his Reproof. Lo, theſe are Part of his Ways; but how little a Portion is heard of Him? and the Thunder of his Power who can underſtand?* The Power of his Thunder is great, which diſcovered the Foreſt, and makes the Hinds to calve. What then is the Thunder of his Power, when GOD doth but whiſper a Rebuke into the Ear of a Man, that maketh his Beauty to conſume like a Moth? What then can He do, nay what can He not do when he thunders from Heaven? In ſhort, his Power is irrefiſtible, and his Will in all Things efficacious. He can

master all Difficulties, and conquer all Enemies, and overcome all Opposition; when He hath a Mind to work, who shall let Him? He asks no Leave, He needs no Help, He knows no Impediment. Mountains in his Way become Plains; his Counsel shall stand, and the Thoughts of his Heart to all Generations.

3. GOD is fit to govern the World upon the Account of his Wisdom and Knowledge. His Eyes run to and fro through the Earth. He observes all the Motions and Ways of Men. He understands what hath been, is, and shall be. *Hell is naked before Him*, how much more Earth. His Eye is upon the Conclave of Rome, the Cabals of Princes, and the Closets of particular Persons. Excellently doth David set forth the Divine Omniscience, *Psalms cxxxix. Thou knowest my Down-sitting, and my Up-rising, and understandest my Thoughts afar off. Thou compassest my Path, and my Lying-down, and art acquainted with all my Ways; there is not a Word in my Tongue, but, O LORD, Thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before.* He knows not only what is done by Man, but also what is in Man, all his Goodness, and all his Wickedness; all his Contrivances, Purposes and Designs; *The Heart is deceitful above all Things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?* Do you ask who? The Answer is ready, **JEHOVAH.** *He searcheth the Heart, He tryeth and possesseth the Reins.* Those are dark Places, far removed from the Eyes of all the World; but GOD's Eyes are like a Flame of Fire, they carry their own Light with them, and discover those Recesses, run through all the Labyrinths of the Heart, they look into each Corner of it, and see what lurks there, what is doing there. O! what Manner of Persons should we be! with what



what Diligence should we keep our Hearts, since God observes them with so much Exactness! Men may take a View of the Practices of others, but God sees their Principles, and to what they incline them. Yea, He knows how to order and command the Heart; not only how to affright it with Terrors, and to allure it with Kindnesses, and persuade it with Arguments, but likewise how to change it by his Power. He cannot only enfeeble it when set upon Evil, but also confirm, and fix, and fortify it to that which is good. The Hearts of Kings are in the Hands of the LORD, and He turneth them as the Rivers of Water.

4. GOD is fit to govern the World upon the Score of his Long-suffering and Forbearance. Those that have the Reins of Government in their Hands, had need be Persons of excellent and cool Spirits; for if they have great Power, and but a small Stock of Patience, they will soon put all into a Flame. That Man who hath but a little Family to manage, will in that meet with Exercises enough; how much more he that is set over a Kingdom; and unspeakably more yet he that is to govern the World? especially considering the present State of the World, and how Things have been ever since Sin made an Entry into it. *The whole World now lieth in Wickedness*; and God is every Day mocked to his Face. Angelical Patience would soon be spent, and turn'd into such Fury as would reduce all into a *Chaos*. There is not an Angel in Heaven, but if there were a Commission given him, would do immediate Execution, and sheath the Sword of Vengeance in the Bowels of Malefactors. But *God is infinite in Patience, slow to Anger, and of great Kindness*, Tho' He be disobeyed, abused, grieved, vexed, pressed with the Sins of Men, even as a Cart is pressed that is

laden with Sheaves, yet He spares and bears, and waits. How loath is He to stir up all his Wrath, and to pour out the Vials thereof? He counts that his strange Work, when He goeth about it his Bowels often yearn, and his Repentings are kindled together. He seemed to stand with his Hand stretched out, as one resolved to give a consuming Blow, but He laid aside his Weapons of Indignation, and in the Greatness of his Compassion cried out, *How shall I give thee up Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee Judah? How shall I make thee as Admah, how shall I set thee as Zeboim? My Heart is turned within Me: I will not execute the Fierceness of mine Anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim, for I am GOD, and not Man.* Thus we see GOD is accomplished for the Government of the World.

In the second Place let us enquire concerning the Extent of GOD's governing Providence, how far and unto what it reaches. And take this in general; The whole World, and whatsoever is contained within the Compass of Heaven and Earth, are ordered by Him as his Family, the Church is regarded by Him as his Spouse, and all good Men as his Children. All Men, even the worst and vilest, with all their Actions, and all Creatures, even the meanest, are ordered by GOD. and directed to their appointed Ends. But we will descend to Particulars.

*First,* THE Governing Providence of GOD extends itself to all Creatures whatsoever both animate and inanimate, the greatest and the least. *He rules the Stars, the Influences of Pleiades, and the Bands of Orion are from Him. He causeth the Sun to shine, sets him daily and annual Journeys, and when He pleaseth stops him in his Course,*

Course, and turns him back, when he comes out of his Chamber as a Bridegroom, or a Giant refreshed with Wine. He makes small the Drops of Rain, and causeth them to fall upon one City, and not upon another. He feeds the Fowls, and musters Caterpillars, Locusts, Flies as his Armies. Angels are his Servants, absolutely at his Beck, ready to execute his Will; and by Him they are sent forth to minister to his Children, and to punish his Enemies. He hath enraged Devils in a Chain, and both confines them, and employs them as He Himself thinks good. He permitted one to be a lying Spirit in the Mouth of *Ahab's* Prophets. He permitted *Satan* to do much against *Job*, yet kept him from touching his Life. He cast Devils out of the Possessed, and gave them leave to enter into an Herd of Swine. He governs Men too, keeping *Abimelech* from violating *Sarah's* Chastity, and *Laban* from touching *Jacob's* Liberty or Goods, and *Esau* from offering Violence to his Life. The meanest Creatures are the Objects of his Care, and the noblest are over-ruled by his Power.

Secondly, THE Governing Providence of God extends itself to all Motions and Actions. Without Him we can do Nothing. As a special Assistance is necessary to gracious Acts, so is a general Concourse to natural ones. Unless He support we cannot stir a Step, nor strike a Stroke, nor speak a Word, nor form a Thought. God suspends the Creatures Actions when He pleaseth; thus He kept the Fire from burning the three Children that were thrown into it, when put into its greatest Rage: He stopt the Mouths of Lions, and kept them from preying upon *Daniel*, when Hunger was feeding upon them: And it was He that taught and commanded the rapacious Raven to forget itself, that it might carry Food to a Pro-



phet. GOD orders and directs Actions to Ends never designed by the Doer; yea, He makes the most vile and wicked Actions subservient to most excellent Ends. The King of *Assyria* thought of Nothing else but to destroy Nations; but GOD sent Him as an Executioner of his Justice to punish an hypocritical Nation, and the People of his Wrath. Thus GOD doth not only uphold his Creatures in their Beings, and assist and strengthen them in their Actions, but He doth also direct, order, and over-rule those Actions, so that their Issue shall be admirable. Wicked Men have base and sordid Ends in the Commission of Sin, but GOD hath holy Ends in his Permission thereof: While they gratify their Lusts, He fulfills his Pleasure; and while they act like Devils, He acts like GOD.

*Thirdly*, THIS governing and over-ruling Providence of GOD extends itself to all Issues and Results of Things, both good and evil; *the Lot is cast into the Lap, but the Disposal thereof is of the LORD.* He is the Fountain of all the Good and Comforts which we enjoy, for which we are under everlasting Obligations to praise his Name. That the House is built, we owe more to GOD than to the Workmen; and in the Preservation of the City, GOD is more to be thanked and acknowledged than the Watchman. It is unquestionably Mens Duty to follow their Callings, and mind their Business, and study good Husbandry, for the Sluggard shall be cloathed with Rags, and the Prodigal will be glad of Husks; but if after all Endeavour and Care an Estate comes in, it is more of GOD's sending than of Man's fetching. The Blessing of GOD makes rich, and not Man's Diligence without it. When you are sick, it is your Wisdom and Duty to send for the most able, skilful.

ſkilful and faithful Phyſicians, and to follow the Method, and uſe the Means, which they preſcribe; but when your Diſtempers are removed, and your Health is reſtored, you are beholden more to GOD than to Men and Means; for notwithstanding them, your Souls would dwell in Silence, if the LORD Himſelf were not your Help. *The Battle is not to the Strong, nor the Race to the Swift, nor doth Promotion come from the Eaſt, or the Weſt; but the LORD pulleth down one, and ſetteth up another.*

So for evil Things, we are too prone to reſt in ſecond Cauſes, and care not to look ſo high as GOD; but whether we take Notice of Him or no, there is no Rod under which we ſmart, but GOD's Hand lays it on. *Eliphaz* tells us, *Job* v. 6. *Aſſiſtion cometh not forth from the Duſt, neither doth Trouble ſpring out of the Ground, i. e.* they do not come by Chance, tho' many Things be Contingences, yet all Things have a Cauſe: To us indeed they are caſual, but to GOD they are certain. He Himſelf foreſaw, and fore-appointed them. There is nothing of Fortune, but all is of Counſel. *Is there any Evil in the City, and the LORD hath not done it; i. e.* any penal Evil, any afflictive Evil. There is no Sickneſs nor Pain thou groaneſt under, not a Loſs thou meeteſt with, not a Croſs that pinches thee, but thou mayſt write the Name of GOD upon it. *He creates Darkneſs, as well as forms the Light.* When Things run croſs to Mens Deſires and Expectations, they grow froward, and quarrel at this and that; but let this ſilence them, and work them to an humble and patient Submiſſion, that all is of GOD. *Israel* rebelled againſt the Houſe of *David*, therefore *Rehoboam* armed *Judah* and *Benjamin* to bring the Kingdom again to him; ſtay, ſaid GOD, *ye ſhall not go up, nor fight*

*fight against your Brethren, the Children of Israel, return every Man to his House, for this Thing is of Me. All Good is of GOD, that obligeth us to Thankfulness. All Evil is of GOD, and that should teach us patiently to submit. I was dumb, said David, and opened not my Mouth, because LORD, Thou didst it.*

IN the third Place we shall enquire after the Properties of GOD's Government, or the Manner how He orders and governs all Things.

1. GOD doth govern the World mysteriously, so the Text tells us, *Clouds and Darknes are round about him.* As there are Mysteries in the Word, so in the Works of GOD: Things hard to be understood, many Riddles, which puzzle Men of the largest and most piercing Understandings. *Behold, I go forward, but He is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; on the Left Hand where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him; but He knoweth the Way that I take.* GOD knoweth our Ways, and counteth our Steps, but the wisest of Men do not know all GOD's Ways. His Way is frequently in the Sea, and his Chariot in the Clouds, so that He is invisible, not only in his Essence, but also in the Design and Tendency of his Operations. Those that behold Him with an Eye of Faith, do not yet see Him with an Eye of Understanding, so as to discern his Way, and whether He is going. St. Paul assures us, *His Judgments are unsearchable, and his Ways past finding out.* Some of them indeed are obvious, plain and easy. We may upon the first View give a satisfactory Account of them. We may read Righteousness, Equity, Mercy, Love in them, because written in capital Letters, and with such Beams of Light, as he that runs may read them. But others of GOD's Ways are dark and obscure, so that they are out of our Reach, and above our Sight.

He



He that goes about in them to trace GOD, may quickly loſe himſelf. They are like that Hand-writing upon the Wall, which none of *Belſhazzar's* wiſe Men could read or interpret. There are Secrets of State and Government, which are not fit to be made common. But this may be our Comfort, though GOD doth not now give an Account of his Matters, nor is He obliged thereunto, yet He can give a ſatisfactory Account, and one Day his People ſhall be let into the Myſtery. And though many Things which GOD doth they know not now, yet they ſhall ſoon know them afterward. And when they know they ſhall approve and admire, both the Things, the Reason, and the End; they ſhall then be perfectly reconciled to all Providences, and ſee that all were worthy of GOD.

2. GOD doth govern the World wiſely; He did indeed threaten it as a dreadful Judgment upon *Ju- dah* and *Jeruſalem*, *Iſa. iii. 4.* *That He would give Children to be their Princes, and Babes ſhould rule over them:* Not meaning Children in Years, for *Jofiah*, a Child, was one of the beſt of their Kings, but Children in Underſtanding; ſuch as had no Prudence, nor Conduct, knew not how to hold the Reins, or direct the Courſe. It is certainly fatal to the World when a young, fooliſh *Phaeton* is got into the Chariot; when an unſkilful Pilot ſits at Helm, the Paſſengers of the Ship will ſoon be brought to their laſt Prayers. But GOD is wiſe in Heart, yea, infinite in Wiſdom: All the Treasures of Wiſdom are in Him, and no Wiſdom is to be found in Angels or Men, but what came from Him, and all that (were it united in one) would not be comparable to what is in Him. *The very Fooliſhneſs of GOD is wiſer than Men.*

THERE

THERE are two Things of which Wisdom consists, and both are in GOD most eminently: Knowledge of the Nature of Things, and Prudence to dispose and order them. GOD knows all Things perfectly, and orders them all exactly; all Things are naked and opened before Him, and most curiously and accurately managed by Him. Men in Authority sometimes mistake and miscarry, doing many Things amiss: But in all Things GOD acts very wisely. He is not a Man that should err or repent; ever since the Creation all Things have been done with that unreprieveable Exactness, that if the World were to begin again, there should not be an Alteration in a Tittle. All hath been so well that Nothing can be mended. Those dark and obscure Passages of Providence, at which good Men are startled, and by which all Men are posed, are excellent and curious Strokes, and as so many well-plac'd Shades, which commend the Work, and admirably set off the Beauty of Providence. That is a great Scripture most worthy of our particular Notice, *Ephes. i. 11. He worketh all Things according to the Counsel of his Will*: Which Words plainly speak these two Things.

1. **THE Independency of GOD in his Operations.** He asketh not Leave of any, neither Men nor Angels; He is not beholden to them, He doth not advise with them, He cannot be forced or hindered by them. He acts not according to their Will, but His own, and fulfils all his Pleasure.

2. **The Wisdom of GOD in His working.** He doth all according to his Counsel; He is a GOD of Judgment, a most judicious GOD, and all his Works are done in Judgment.

IT is ſaid of GOD. *Iſa. xxviii. 29.* that *He is wonderful in Counſel, and excellent in Working*; this latter neceſſarily follows the former. He muſt needs be excellent in Working becauſe wonderful in Counſel: All that He doth is the Reſult of a moſt admirable Judgment, and mature Counſel. The holy Prophet therefore was raviſhed in his Spirit upon the Conſideration of GOD's Works, both for their Number and for their Wiſdom; *Pſal. civ. 24.* O LORD, *how manifold are thy Works, in Wiſdom haſt Thou made them all!* They are very many, yet all very good; notwithſtanding their Multitude and Variety. GOD miſcarried in none; there is an Impreſs of Wiſdom upon them all.

3. GOD governs all Things powerfully; where the Word of a King is, *Solomon* tells us there is Power. What Power then doth the Word of GOD carry with it? He orders and rules, turns and overturns Things as He thinks good. That is a comfortable Place which we have, *Iſa. xxxiii. 11.* *The Counſel of the LORD ſtandeth for ever, and the Thoughts of his Heart to all Generations.* The Counſel of the LORD doth ſo ſtand that all Things ſhall fall before it that riſe up in Oppoſition to it. The Counſel of the Heathen is brought to Nought, and the Devices of the People are of no Effect. As the Rod of *Mofes* prevailed againſt the Rod of the Magicians, ſo do the Thoughts and Counſels of GOD againſt all other Thoughts and Counſels that run counter to them, *Pſal. cxxxv. 6.* *Whatſoever the LORD pleaſed, that He did, in the Heaven and in the Earth, and in the Seas, and in all deep Places.* GOD's Will obtains every where. Down Man, down Devil, you muſt yield. Things ſhall not be as you will, but as GOD will. We may well ſay, *who hath reſiſted his Will?* Many indeed diſobey and



and sin against the Will of his Precept, but none ever shall frustrate the Will of his Purpose, for He will do all his Pleasure, and in his Way Mountains shall become a Plain.

MANY Men think, and some say, they will do what they will, especially great Men who are advanced in Place, and armed with Power. Their Will is their own Reason, and shall be other Mens Law; but to say *I will have my Will*, is a Speech too lofty for a Creature. When they exalt their Wills GOD can bind their Hands, and break their Necks. How resolved was *Pharaoh*? He would do this and that, that he would, *Exod. xv. 9.* The Enemy said, *I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the Spoil, my Lust shall be satisfied upon them, I will draw my Sword, mine Hand shall destroy them.* But GOD resolved, that as high and great and proud as *Pharaoh* was, he should not have his Will, and GOD was too hard for him, ver. x. *Thou didst blow with the Wind, the Sea covered them, they sunk down as Lead in the mighty Waters, by the Blast of GOD they perished, and by the Breath of his Nostrils they were consumed.* GOD did easily scatter and consume them, as if they had been but Dust or Chaff; the Breath of GOD's Nostrils stopt the Breath of their Nostrils. Nay GOD need not send forth a Blast, when he did but give a Look, the Host of the *Egyptians* were troubled. When GOD hides his Face from his People, He troubles them, and when He looks upon his Enemies, He can trouble them.

NAY more, GOD can not only bind the Hands of Men, but He likewise can bind their Wills, yea and turn their Hearts too as the Rivers of Water. He can make Enemies to be at Peace, and Lions to lie down with Lambs, and Leopards with Kids, and *Egyptians* to give their Jewels unto *Israelites*; yea,

yea He can not only pacify them, but reconcile them, turning their Enmity into Friendſhip, their Hatred into Love. *Eſau* reſolved to kill his Brother *Jacob*; but he embraced him, fell on his Neck and kiſſed him. Obſerve that Paſſage, which plainly ſpeaks God's Power over the Spirits and Wills of Men, *Exod. xxxiv. 23, 24.* God's Command there was, *Thrice in the Year ſhall all your Men-Children appear before the LORD GOD of Iſrael; And his Promiſe was this, No Man ſhall deſire thy Land, when thou ſhalt go up to appear before the LORD thy GOD thrice in the Year.* The Jews were invironed with Enemies, and thoſe Enemies might very well deſire their Land, flowing with Milk and Honey; and when all the Males were gone up to *Jeruſalem*, that was a fit Opportunity for an Invaſion. But ſaith GOD, trouble not yourſelves, do your Duty, go up when I bid you, and I will take Care and overrule in the Caſe; look you to your Duty, and I will look to your Borders; I will ſo order the Spirits of your Enemies, that not a Man among them ſhall have any Mind to give you a Diſturbance, or to make an Inroad into your Country. And this may afford ſtrong Conſolation to us in the very worſt of Times, and when Things are darkeſt, that the GOD whom we ſerve, hath ſuch an effectual Influence upon the Hearts and Wills of Men, even of thoſe that are his Peoples moſt deſperate and enraged Enemies.

4. GOD doth govern the World moſt righteouſly. So the Text tells us, *Righteouſneſs and Judgment are the Habitation of his Throne.* It is true, many Times Affairs are ſo managed, and Things at ſuch a Paſs, Vice encouraged, and Virtue frowned upon, Godlineſs trampled under Foot, and Prophane- neſs triumphing; that thereby ſome have been induced to queſtion a Providence, and even good Men

have been stumbled. But it doth not become any of us to call the great and glorious God down to the Bar of our Reason, nor to measure his Dealings with our Line. It is not for us to be his Counsellors or Judges. Rather, where we cannot comprehend Him, let us adore Him, still resolving with *Jeremy* to hold fast this Conclusion, *Righteous art Thou, O LORD*, And this is certain, whatsoever Advantages some wicked Men may have as to outward Enjoyments, yet even here good Men have the better of them, their Lines are cast in more pleasant Places, so that they have no Cause of Envy or Complaint.

HAVE wicked Men at any Time the Smiles of the World, the Favour of great Ones, do they glister with Jewels, and abound with sensual Comforts? But good Men, though they be poor and and despised, and counted the Off-scouring of the World, have the Love of God's Heart, which is most cordial, better than Wine, the Graces of his Spirit, which are beyond the Gold of *Ophyr*; and the Light of his Countenance, and Beams of his Favour, which make the most lightsome and comfortable Day. They are arrayed with the Robe of Righteousness and Garment of Salvation, which adorn them more than Garments of wrought Gold. *Christ* leads them into his Banqueting-house, and there spreads over them the Banner of his Love, which affords the surest Protection, and the sweetest Shade. Who but themselves are able to tell or conceive what unspeakable and glorious Joy they have, what Triumphs and Exultings of Soul, when *Jesus* kisseth them with the Kisses of his Lips, and by his own Spirit witnesseth with theirs that they are the Children of God. What are Mines of Gold, what are Crowns and Scepters to one Drachm of Grace, one Smile from Heaven, one

Whis.



Whisper of Divine Love, one Embrace of a Saviour? Cursed, said noble *Galeacius*, be that Man who counteth all the World worth one Hour's Communion with *Jesus Christ*! And if one Hour of Communion be so precious, what is a Life of Communion?

BUT then, stay 'till the Winding up of the Bottom, 'till that last and great Day shall dawn, in which there will be a Revelation of the righteous Judgment, and of the marvellous Goodness of God, wherein the Wicked shall be stript of all their Honour and Power, of all their Riches and Pleasures, and turned into Hell, for the unquenchable Fire, and the Worm of Conscience eternally to feed upon them: And those who have closed with *Christ*, and bowed to his Scepter, and walked closely with God, and studied the Power of Godliness, shall enter into Peace, and be cloathed with Glory, and sit upon Thrones, possessed of a Fullness of Joy, and drinking Rivers of Pleasure, under the brightest and warmest Beams of divine Love, and in the full uninterrupted Enjoyment of *those Things which Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor have entered into the Heart of Man*. Then all the World, the most stupid and unteachable Part of it will be thoroughly convinced, that there is a Reward for the Righteous, a God that judgeth in the Earth, and that true Godliness is profitable for all Things, both for the Life that now is, and for that which is to come. Therefore in the mean Time, though Clouds and Darkness are round about the Throne, yet let us rejoice in the firm Belief of what the Prophet tells us, *Psalm clxv. 17. The LORD is righteous in all his Ways, and holy in all his Works.*

THE last Thing promised for the Proof of this, that God's Governing the World may well support us in the Midst of all Distractions, is to pre-

sent to your Consideration several Things more particularly relating to the Church and People of God. And they are these:

1. THE Nearness, Dearness, and Intimacy of that Relation, in which the Church stands to God. What may not the Wife and Children of a loving and mighty King promise themselves from his Government? Certainly they may well be assured, so long as he keeps his Throne, they shall want neither Defence nor Comfort. The Church is God's Vineyard, and will He not water it, and keep it every Moment, lest any hurt it? She is the Spouse of *Christ*, and will He not be tender over her, and kind to her? He is a Father to his People, and will He not look after them, and afford them Maintenance and necessary Supplies? He is more than a Mother to them, and will He not draw out his Breasts of Consolation to them? Doubtless they may expect all Good, all Kindness, all Comforts from Him, who hath been graciously pleased to put Himself into all Relations unto them. *David* looked with an Eye of Faith but to one Relation in which God stood to him, *the LORD is my Shepherd*; and from thence he saw sufficient Encouragement to conclude, that *he should not want*. What mayst thou then, O Believer, argue from all God's Relations? He is my God, my King, my Master, my Father, my Husband; therefore surely I shall not want. He is a Sun and Shield, a Sun for Comfort, and a Shield for Security. In *his Beams then his Children shall rejoice, and in his Shadow shall they sit safely, and no good Thing shall He withhold from them that walk uprightly*.

2. THE special Interest which God hath in his Church and People: They are his Portion and Inheritance; and no one will, if he can help it, lose his

his Portion. *Naboth* would not part with his Inheritance upon any Terms, neither sell nor change it; much less will *Christ* with His. His People are his Jewels, and will He suffer them to be lost? They are his Treasure, and what! shall his Enemies rob Him of that? No, no, *where his Treasure is, there is his Heart also*; and where his Heart is, there shall his Eye be watching, and his Hand of Power shall be stretched out, and his Wings of Protection shall be spread abroad, and *Salvation itself shall be for Walls and Bulwarks*. The Interest which God hath in all the World is not comparable to that Interest which God hath in the Church. The rest are but his Slaves, these are his Children; the rest are but the rude Wilderness, these are his Gardens inclosed. In others He sees his Power, but in these his Image and his Son. Others are the Work of his Hands, but these are the Workmanship of his Spirit.

3. THAT entire Affection which He beareth his Church and People. As He stands in all Relations to them, so He hath all Affections for them. You that understand what Love is, feel within yourselves what a mighty Power and Vigour there is in it. Now there is no Love in the World comparable to the Love of God. He hath a Flame to our Spark, an Ocean to our Drop. The dearest of God's Love is placed upon *Christ*, and in and for *Christ's* Sake the same Love is placed upon the Church and People of *Christ*; *Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me*. And what will not such Love do? It will awaken Care, and call forth Power, and engage Wisdom, and open the Exchequer, and stick at no Pains, no Expence, *Isaiah xliii. 4. Since thou wast precious in my Sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee, therefore will I give Men for thee, and People for thy Life.* GOD loves



*the Gates of Sion more than all the Dwellings of Jacob, and the Dwellings of Jacob more than all the Tents and Palaces of Wickedness, and more than all the Thrones of Iniquity, that frame Mischief by a Law; for these shall have no Fellowship with Him. He loves one Saint more than He doth ten thousand ungodly Wretches, and his poor Church more than all the World. And since this GOD, who is so much your Friend, governs the World, sit down and think how much you may expect from Him; nay, what Good is there which you may not expect?*

4. GOD hath especially charged Himself with his Church and People. Now a good King looks upon it as his Duty to study and promote the Welfare of all his Subjects, but in a more particular Manner, the Happiness of his Consort and Children.

THERE is, as I have shewn, a general Providence of GOD, which extends itself to the whole World; but besides that, there is a special Providence exercised about good Men, of whom He is as tender as the Apple of his Eye. The Interest of his People lies closest to his Heart, and doth most engage his Thoughts. Others are under his Eye, which runs to and fro through the Earth; but these are under his Wing. *Doth GOD take Care of Oxen?* Yes, that He doth, and of Asses too, and of young Lions, and Wolves, and Bears, and Tigers, and all the Beasts of Prey; but He takes another Manner of Care for his Lambs, and his Doves in the Clefts of the Rock, and in the secret Places of the Stairs. You read, and rejoice when you read, *1 Tim. iv. 10. That He is the Saviour of all Men, but especially of those that believe.* They are his peculiar People, and so the Objects of his peculiar

culiar Care; whatsoever God doth, He minds them; and whoever are neglected, they are not. What! *Noah* drowned in the Waters of the Deluge, or *Lot* burnt with *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* and the Cities of the Plain! No, no, it could not possibly be: *Noah* must be secured in the Ark before the Windows of Heavens were opened, and the Fountains of the great Deep were broken up; and *Lot* must be arrived at *Zoar*, the City of his Refuge, before the Storm of Fire and Brimstone could fall.

5. God hath already done great and marvellous Things for his People, not only in the ordinary Way of his common Providence, but likewise putting forth extraordinary and magnificent Acts whensoever their Case did call for them. Miracles have been Nothing to Him at such a Time; He hath not only wrought one or two, but multiplied them; there hath been a Series of them, as if He counted them cheap. His Arm hath awakened and put on Strength, and also put forth Strength. No less than ten wonderful Plagues did He send upon that proud King *Pharaoh*, *Israel's* Oppressor; and rather than he should not have let them go, He would have sent a thousand more. And if after they were gone, *Pharaoh* would pursue them, God would make for *Israel* a Way through the Sea, and for *Pharaoh* and his Host a Grave in it. The Course of Nature was stopt, and the Sun made to stand still upon *Gibeon*, and the Moon in the Valley of *Ajalon*, that his People might avenge themselves upon their Enemies. Clouds showered down Manna upon them, and flinty Rocks poured out Water. And though such Kind of Works have not been performed in the latter Days, yet God in them hath not left Himself without Witness, neither is his Arm shortened: Miracles are as easy to Him now as they were formerly, and if Need were

were He would do them. But besides them, consider these three Things, which GOD hath done all along.

1. HE hath in all Times preserved and kept up a Church in the World. Though *Christ* hath but a little Flock, and that encompassed with ravening Wolves, yet He hath always had a Flock. When all Flesh had corrupted their Way, there was a Church in *Noah's* Family. When *Israel* had generally perverted their Way, and turned aside to abominable Idolatry, there were still reserved seven thousand faithful Worshipers, that had not bowed the Knee to *Baal*. In the thickest Darknes, and most furious Rage of Popery, there were those that owned and suffered for the Truths of the Gospel. The four mighty Monarchies of the World have been shaken down and broken in Pieces, but the Kingdom of the LORD is an everlasting Kingdom, and his Dominion is from Generation to Generation. The Church indeed hath not been always alike conspicuous, nor hath it always been in the same State of Purity, Peace and Prosperity; but it hath always had a Being. *Christ* was never without some militant Subjects, nor his Truth without some faithful Witnesses.

2. GOD hath employed Angels for his Church, who knowing it to be the Will of their great Creator, readily comply and chearfully obey. As the Gates of Hell set themselves against it, so doth the Host of Heaven engage for it, *Heb. i. 14. They are all ministring Spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be Heirs of Salvation.* When the Prophet *Elisha* was in Danger from environing Enemies, the Mountain was immediately garrisoned with Horses and fiery Chariots, that came in to be his Guard. They have it given them in expresse Charge



to bear the Saints up in their Hands, and to encamp round about them; and may not this be a singular Comfort to Believers? What, though they be the Objects of Hell's Envy, and Earth's Malice, yet they are God's Darlings, and the Charge of Angels! And whatsoever Work Angels have to do for them, they not only dispatch it faithfully, but delight to do so.

3. God hath turned all Things to the Church's Advantage, so that it hath not been a Loser in the Uphot; both the North and the South Wind have made Spices to flow forth. *All Things work together for Good to them who love God.* Comforts and Crosses, Mercies and Judgments, Sunshine and Storms, Ordinances and Afflictions, every Thing, all Things are employed, all busy, all at Work, and all at Work for Good. Take a wicked Man, and all Things are against him; take a Child of God, and all Things are for him, all are sent upon an excellent Design, and shall prosper in it. More particularly, Oppositions, Persecutions and fiery Trials have issued in these three Things, which are choice Advantages.

1. By these Things God separates between the Good and the Bad, the Precious and the Vile. In those Fields where there is Care taken to sow the best and cleanest Corn, the envious One will come and scatter Tares. Churches contract Filth and Corruption as well as other Bodies, and though they were very pure in their first Erecting, yet afterward they degenerate. Some among them leave their first Love and their first Works, and live not according to the Gospel. Now Afflictions are the Physick God gives for the purging them out; these are the Fan of *Christ*, with which he clears his Floor; they are his Fire for the Refining of his Gold,

Gold, and severing it from the Dross. When Storms arise, the unsound Fruit falls off: When Persecution ariseth, stony-ground Hearers are offended; then away go Formalists, and all such as were Strangers to the Power of Godliness.

2. By Troubles and Persecutions the Good are bettered; in such Times, and by such Means, their Corruptions are mortified, and their Graces are brightened. The Trees of Righteousness root the faster for being shaken with Tempests, and flourish the more for their Pruning. Their fierce Trials refine their Souls, and heat them into a greater Zeal for God and Holiness. The very Rage and Malice of their Enemies doth strengthen their Care, and raise their Resolution, so that they grow stronger and stronger. Upon these two Accounts, when Times are saddest, and Persecution hottest, whatever may be said of the Actings of Men, there is no Cause to complain of Male-Administration on God's Part, so long as the Church is made purer, and the Saints are made better. But,

3. By these Persecutions the Church is enlarged, and the Number of her Children is increased. The Oppressing of the *Israelites* by *Pharaoh*, issued in their Multiplying. When the Church at *Jerusalem* was scattered, the Kingdom of *Christ* was enlarged the more. Those Afflictions which happened to *St. Paul*, ended in the Furtherance of the Gospel. The Blood of the Martyrs hath all along been the Seed of the Church. Persecutors are Fools as well as Mad-men; they lose what they do; *Christ* and the Gospel gain. So doth God outshoot his Enemies, and makes their very Wrath to praise Him. Do you, all you that profess Religion and Godliness, look to it, that the Number of Christians be not lessened through your wretched Apostacy,

Apostacy, and then it shall be augmented through your Firmness and holy Constancy. That is the fifth Thing by which we may support and comfort ourselves, viz. The great Things which God hath done for his People.

6. THERE are very great and glorious Things which God hath further to do. If all were accomplished which God has in his Heart to do for his Church, none of us should be here, the World would have an End, and Time would be no more. The World doth owe its Continuance to the Church. It is but the Stage upon which God is acting for his Name and for his Church, and when the Act is finished, the Stage shall be pulled down. When wicked Men are plotting against the Church, and persecuting her Children, they are digging up those very Foundations, on which themselves stand, and pulling down the Pillars that uphold them. And as God continues the World for the Sake of the Church, so He hath great Things yet in his Purpose, which must not fail of Accomplishment. Such as these, the giving great Peace to her Children, the bringing down her proud and insulting Enemies. The bringing in both his antient People the *Jews*, and the Fulness of the *Gentiles*. The making the Place of his Feet glorious, and setting up the Mountain of his House in the Top of the Mountains, and causing the Kings of the Earth to bring their Glory and the Honour of the Nations into it.

7. God hath laid upon Himself strong Obligations to do these Things, and therefore we are on the sure Hand. God hath bound Himself by Promise, and that is good Security; God's Word is settled in Heaven. God can as soon cease to be, as falsify his Word. Whatsoever thou hast a Promise for,



for, O Believer, thou mayst be as sure of, as if thou hadst the Thing in thine own Possession. And how dark soever, Providence may seem to be, do not fear; for there always is a sweet Harmony between Providences and Promises, yea the great Work and Business of Providence is to give Accomplishment to the Promises.

8. God is greatly concerned in the Welfare of his Church and People; He is more concerned than we are, and all the Men in the World. It is true, we are nearly concerned in the Prosperity of the Church; in the Church's Peace it is that we shall have Peace. Our all is embarked in this Ship, if that should be cast away, we are ruined. Let Religion be lost, and we are lost. Farewell Prosperity and all that you can call Good; and therefore none of us should be careless, or wanting to Prayer or Duty. But know, God is more concerned than we are. As to this lower World, God's Stock of Glory lyes in the Hands of his Church and People, and his Revenue is brought in by them, and will He not look after them? Let us not fear where no Fear is; let us not fear in the Midst of Fears. We may be confident that God will wisely steer the Course, and carry the Ship safe into its Harbour, in which He hath his Name and Honour embarked. He will never give his Glory to another, nor his Praise to graven Images; and if not to graven Images, then not to Papists. Suppose those cursed Philistines should take the Ark, yet know assuredly, the captivated Ark will be too hard for *Dagon*; graven Images and all Idolatry shall fall before it.

9. LASTLY, let us comfort ourselves with this, that the Government is laid upon *Christ's* Shoulder, and the Sceptre put into his Hand, and all Power

Power both in Heaven and Earth committed to him. GOD the Father hath set Him up for his King upon his holy Hill of Zion, and hath so established and fixed his Throne, that He looks with Scorn upon all the Attempts of his Enemies. And all that Power which He hath was committed to Him, and is to be employed by Him for the Continuance and Comfort of his Church. *He is made Head over all Things to the Church.* Whatsoever He hath as Head, is for the Advantage of that his mystical Body. And what may we not expect from such a Father as GOD, from such a King as *Jesus*? And with what Peace and Delight may we sit under his Shadow! Well might the holy Psalmist say, *Psal. cxlix. 2. Let Israel rejoice in Him that made Him, let the Children of Sion be joyful in their King.* From what Christ hath done, we may strongly argue to that which He will do. He was incarnate for his Church, He was made under the Law for her, He became poor for her, He humbled himself for her, He laid down his Life for her, He bare the Rage of Man, and the Wrath of GOD for her, He endured the Cross, and despised the Shame, because it was for her, and therefore question not but He will rule and govern for her.

HAVING thus finished the doctrinal Part, I come to the Application.

AND, First, I exhort you that are the People of GOD, to fetch Support and Consolation from this precious Truth. The Times in which we live are indeed very dark and tempestuous, GOD is shaking all Nations. But let this support, and quiet and comfort you, that however Things go, GOD still governs the World. And that this may be sweet to you follow these Directions.

1. MAKE sure that you be in the Number of *Christ's* Subjects; such as have submitted to his Government, and are devoted to his Fear. If you have kissed the Son, you may rejoice at the Thoughts of GOD's governing the World, when you feel and are assured of his governing in your Hearts. Then may the Remembrance and Consideration of his universal Kingdom be cordial to you, when you find He hath erected a Kingdom within you. This is firm Ground of strong Consolation, and of Quietness and Assurance for ever. If you are the loyal Subjects of *Christ's* Kingdom, then you are the Children of his Family, and you may promise yourselves that He will carefully look after you, and graciously provide for you. He hath a peculiar Respect to his peculiar People, for them He hath a strong Tower, in which they shall be safe, when He cometh out of his Place to punish the Inhabitants of the Earth for their Iniquity. Judgment begins at the House of GOD, and that is to make Way for Mercy, those Judgments prepare for Deliverances here and for Glory hereafter. But O! the dreadful Storms of Wrath that shall fall upon the Wicked, what Thunder-bolts will GOD assail them with, that will strike them down in the Lake which burns with Fire and Brimstone, and shall never be quenched. Come, Christians, trust in the LORD, and give up yourselves to Him, and then when Enemies threaten you, and Dangers face you, and Fear is on every Side, even then Mercy shall compass you about.

2. HEEDFULLY look to it, that you govern yourselves according to the Will and Law of GOD. Then may you take the Comfort of GOD's governing the World. When you wisely rule your own Spirits, and your Affections, and Conversations,



tions, there is a Promise, that *unto such GOD will shew his Salvation.* The Laws of a Land protect the Subjects so long as they keep them. A Transgression of the Law is the endangering of a Subject. *He shall give his Angels Charge over thee to keep thee in all thy Ways.* Their Commission, as large as it is, reaches no farther; when you leave that, you lose your Guard; but while you keep your Way, Angels, yea the GOD of Angels will keep you. Do not so much fear losing your Estate, or your Liberty, or your Lives, as losing your Way, and leaving your Way; fear that more than any Thing; Nothing but Sin exposes you to Misery. So long as you keep your Way, you shall keep other Things, or if you lose any Thing you shall get that which is better; though you may be Sufferers for *Christ*, you shall not be Losers by Him. If a good Man should be deprived of his temporal Comforts, it will commend spiritual ones the more to him. GOD's Voice is never so sweet, as when He speaks comfortably in a Wilderness. If a Child of GOD should be cut off by a violent Stroke, he is thereby brought the sooner to his Father. If enraged Persecutors add to his Sufferings, in so doing they add to his Crown; and by making his Burden heavy, they make his Glory the more exceeding weighty.

3. LET GOD's governing the World be the Matter of your Faith: No Truth will be a Staff of Support, unless you carry it in a believing Hand, Precepts will not prevail, Threatnings will not awe you, and Promises will not comfort you, any farther than they are believed. Present you with never so precious a Cordial, it will do you no Good unless it be mingled by you with Faith; therefore believe that the Management of all Things is in the Hand of GOD, and pray that you may have a

well confirmed Faith hereof ; when Faith is weak, it affords but weak Comfort ; strengthen your Faith, and that will greaten your Peace and raise your Joy.

To this End, be careful that you do Nothing to the Prejudice of your Faith, do not you weaken that which must support you ; what a Madness was it for *Sampson* to let his Locks be cut, when he knew he should lose his Strength together with them. Now, there is Nothing in the World so prejudicial to Faith as Sin is. A guilty Conscience doth always make a Palsey-hand, shaking, whenever it goes about to lay Hold of God and *Christ*, or any Promise. Rebukes to Conscience are severe Checks to Faith. What is *all* God, to one that cannot say, *my* God ? Guilt makes Faith and Comfort run low ; whereas *great Peace have they that love the Law, and nothing shall offend them* : They have Peace in Trouble, Joy in Sorrow, Calms in Storms, inward Sedateness in the Midst of outward Commotions, *If our Hearts condemn us not, then have we Boldness towards God*, and if so, then Comfort comes in from every Prospect which we have of God. Let us then look upon Him which Way we will, we shall see Smiles and Delights ; that very Appearance, which is dark to others, will give Light to us.

*Lastly*, Be very serious and frequent in your Meditations upon God's governing the World ; fleeting Thoughts make either none, or but slight and short Impressions. The Burning-glass will not fire any combustible Matter, unless it be held some Time with a steady Hand in the Beams of the Sun ; so it is here, dwell therefore in your Thoughts upon this Subject ; consider it, and return to con-

sider ;

sider ; repeat the Work again and again. *Psal.* xxv. 15. *Mine Eyes are ever towards the LORD,* that is, often and often, at all Times, and upon all Occasions. Was he in Straits, he looked to God ? Was he in Danger, he looked to God ? Was he in Fears, he still looked to God ? and that supported him, as you may gather from the next Words. *He shall pluck my Feet out of the Net,* though mine Enemies have got me in their Net, and I am so entangled in it, that I cannot make my own Escape, yet God shall pluck me out. And in such Cases we should specially look to God, under the Notion of the Supreme Governor of the World. Are there Confusions and Distresses up and down in the World ? Are Foundations out of Course ? Yet comfort yourselves, God sits at the Helm, and He is our Refuge and Strength, a very present Help in Time of Trouble.

Secondly, I EXHORT and beseech you, evidence it to the World, That your Belief of God's governing the World doth really support and cheer you in the Midst of all Distractions. The Truth is, the Day in which Providence hath cast us is a Day of Distraction ; the World is stark mad : Wicked Men are mad upon Sin and Vanity, and Superstition and Idolatry, and mad against Religion and Godliness. Well, if they will be mad, let them be so ; God knows how to tame them, and how to chain and fetter them too, He hath Hooks for their Noses, and Bridles for their Jaws.

WHEN there are that make it their Business to destroy and confound all Things, do you rejoice in this, that God governs all wisely, powerfully, graciously, so that those Things which have the most frightful Aspect, shall at last (it may be



ere long) issue in a happy Close. However Affairs go now, GOD hath bid us, *say to the Righteous, it shall be well with him.* Do you evidence the powerful and comfortable Influence that GOD's Government hath upon your Spirits, by these three Things.

1. **FIRST**, by the keeping up your Spirits. Cast not away your Confidence, for it hath great Recompence of Reward. *We will not fear*, saith the Church, *though the Earth be removed, and the Mountains be carried into the Midst of the Sea*, let the Wicked fear where no Fear is, but let the Saints be fearless in the Midst of Fears. *Why are ye fearful*, said Christ to his Disciples, when the Ship was almost covered with Waves. He sets Men above GOD in his Thoughts, whose Fear of Man prevails against his Faith in GOD.

2. **EVIDENCE** it by your Perseverance in Godliness. Hold on your Way, make not Use of any sinful Means, neglect not any Part of your Duty to secure yourselves and avoid Danger; be not beholden to the Devil for your Liberty and Peace. What though there be Lions in the Way? Go on, and proceed boldly, so long as it is the Way of GOD; you may live by Faith, while you walk by Rule; you may walk believably and chearfully while you walk regularly. The Wound that a Man gets by Sin, will put him to far greater Pain, than all his Sufferings for GOD and Godliness would have done. He that purchases the Favour of Men with the Frowns of Conscience, will find he hath made a very hard Bargain. Every Step from GOD is a Step to Ruin, if any Man draw back, GOD's Soul will have no Pleasure in him, whereas he that walks uprightly walks safely.

3. **MAKE** it to appear by the Raisedness of your Expectations; so the Church did in her low Condition, *Micah vii. 8. Rejoice not against me, O mine Enemy, though I fall I shall rise; when I sit in Darkness, the LORD shall be a Light unto me.* At Midnight she looked for the Dawning of a glorious Day, and so do you. God will do great Things, such as shall out-do all that his Enemies have done. God's last Works in the World will be his greatest Works, and by them He will get Himself a glorious Name. *He that shall come, will come and will not tarry.* Therefore encourage yourselves in the **LORD** your God; do your Duty, and quietly wait, for your Expectation shall not be cut off.



## S E R M O N II.

*The Hindrances and Helps to  
a good Memory in Spiritual  
Things.*

I COR. XV. 2.

*By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in  
Memory what I preached unto you, unless  
ye have believed in vain.*

**T**H E R E is no Complaint more common among religious Persons, than the Weakness of their Memories ; thinking perhaps that Defect doth imply least Guilt ; or it may be, mistaking their Carelessness for Forgetfulness ; or else there is really some special Frailty in that Faculty, to heal which is the Design of this Discourse.

**T**H E Apostle Paul in the Verse foregoing, begins to recite and prove the Doctrine of the Resurrection from the Dead, which he doth there declare



declare to be a great Point of that Gospel which he had preached unto them, which also they had received, and wherein they did stand. And then he adds here, *By which (Gospel) also ye are saved, if ye keep in Memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.*

IN which Words we may observe,

THE Influence which this (*keeping in Memory*) hath upon all the rest. And this expressed, 1. By Way of Condition, *ye are saved, if ye keep in Memory.* Our Salvation in some Sort depends upon it. For without the Gospel, no Salvation; without Faith, no Benefit by the Gospel; and without Hearing and Retaining what we hear, no saving Faith. 2. By Way of Exception; *unless ye have believed in vain,* your Hearing is in vain, and your Believing is in vain, if ye do not steadfastly cleave to the Gospel, and to this material Doctrine of it, the Resurrection, and *keep in Memory,* what I have preached unto you concerning it.

THE Lesson that we may learn from hence is this, *viz.*

IF Men would be saved by the Gospel, they must keep in Memory what is preached unto them.

AND under this Proposition I am to handle the Causes and Cures of a bad Memory, or the Hindrances and Helps of a good Memory in spiritual Things. And in order hereunto I shall shew, 1. The ordinary Impediments thereof. 2. The proper Helps unto it. And, 3. make Application.

Application of all. And the good LORD help us now to remember what is preached to us.

I. I AM in the first Place to shew the ordinary Impediments of a good Memory, or the Causes of a bad one, which as ever you desire better Memories, you must beware and seriously strive against. And they are these :

1. A WEAK or dark Understanding. Such indeed may have a great sensitive Memory, as we see in Children, yea in some brute Creatures, but a sound rational Memory they cannot have ; for except a Thing be clearly known, it can never be clearly remembered. If Reason be weak and the Mind be poor, what can the Memory be stored with, but from the Senses ? And you shall observe that your ignorant People have the worst Memories, especially of spiritual Matters. *Matt. xiii. 19. When any one beareth the Word of the Kingdom and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one and catcheth away that which was sown in his Heart.* Words will be remembered to little Purpose, when Things are not understood : And therefore labour for more Knowledge and a clearer Understanding. Beg it of GOD, and according to your Capacities use all Means to increase it.

2. A CARNAL careless Heart, that is mindless of good Things ; for those Things which we little heed, we never remember. According to the Impression on the Heart, is the Retention of the Memory. Such an Heart as this can retain Abundance of a Play or a Song, but of a Chapter or Sermon next to Nothing ; for every Thing keeps what is connatural to itself. Nay a good Mans Memory at a Time when he is more remiss, quite differs from what it is when he is fervent in Spirit.

Spirit. And some Scriptures which were utterly insignificant to him at one Time, read and heard and forgotten, have been quite new to him at another, when his Heart had been rightly disposed. As you know Wax, when it is hard receives no Impression, but soften the same Wax, and then it receives it: And Nothing can be retained in the Heart, if it be not first received by the Memory. And therefore many of you that complain of your bad Memories, have more Reason to lament your dead and hard Hearts, and to be restless 'till they be renewed.

3. A DARLING Sin. Any Bosom Sin, as it fills and employs every Faculty, so it debauches, monopolizes and disorders them all. Grace tho' it rule over every Faculty, yet ruffles none, it composes the Mind, and employs the Memory in a rational Manner: It rules like a just King orderly, but the serving of any Lust, breeds a civil War between one Faculty and another, and that distracts the whole Soul whereby every Power thereof is weakened. And particularly the Memory being pressed to serve the stronger Side, is so stuffed with the Concerns of that Tyrant Lust, that it cannot intend any spiritual Matter. And therefore whatever *right Eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee, Matt. v. 29.* or else thy Memory will never be cured. A Table-book that is written and blotted all over, must be wiped before you can write any new Matter upon it; and so must the Lines of thy darling Sin be effaced, before any good Things will abide legible in thy Memory.

4. EXCESS of worldly Cares is destructive to the Memory. Our Saviour hath plainly told us that *no Man can serve GOD and Mammon.* The  
Memory



Memory is but finite though capacious, and a Super-abundance of worldly Thoughts, must needs shoulder out better Things. Especially these Thoughts being more natural to our depraved Hearts, will so stuff the Memory, that there will be no Room for spiritual Matters. Hereupon we find that young Persons, that have few worldly Cares, have better Memories than others: Care and Thoughts crowd in; therefore, if you would heal you Memories, moderate your Cares; considering that immoderate Care is justly blasted of God, so that it doth no Man any real Good; you would not over-load a Beast, why will you over-load your own Spirits? Particularly be sure that if possibly you can, you settle and digest your spiritual Matters in your Mind after Reading or Hearing, before they be disordered and confounded with worldly Cares.

5. SURFEITING and Drunkenness are great Enemies to the Memory: These disorder the Brain and disable it from its Functions. Excess of Meat doth this, more insensibly, but yet really; a full Belly seldom hath a clear Head. But that of Drink is most evident, *Prov. xxxi. 4, 5. It is not for Kings, O Lemuel, it is not for Kings to drink Wine, nor for Princes strong Drink, lest they should drink and forget the Law.* It is plain that a drunken Man forgets what he said and did; and too many sad Instances are apparent, of many that have drank away not only their Estates, their Health, their Credit, but their very Souls and Brains and all, and are grown very Sotts; therefore keep a strict Watch over yourselves, and if you despise those Christian Rules to which you are sworn, yet do not abhor Morality, do not renounce Humanity.

6. **VIOLENT** Passions spoil the Memory; such as of Anger, Grief, Love, Fear. Passions we must have, but Constitution and Education allay them in some, Reason moderates them in others, and Grace regulates them in all. Where these Bridles are wanting, they shake all the Faculties, as an Earthquake doth a Country. For Example; Anger when it rages, manifestly inflames the Blood, and consequently the Spirits, and melts off the Impressions in the Brain, just as the Fire melts the Wax, and the Impressions that were fixed upon it. So excessive Grief, Fear, or Love. You cannot but perceive in yourselves and others, how your poor Memories have suffered by some or all of them.

AND therefore labour to mortify your Passions; and to that End, endeavour for Strength of Grace: Strong Passions had Need of strong Grace; as you know a heady Horse had Need of a strong Bridle: For you will find, that as there is much Guilt in them, so much Harm comes by them.

7. **A MULTITUDE** of undigested Notions. If a Man have a Stock of methodical and digested Knowledge, it is admirable how much the Memory will contain; as you know how many Images may be discerned at once in a Glass: But when these Notions are heaped incoherently in the Memory, without Order or Dependence, they confound and overthrow the Memory: As the Scholar that has read Abundance, but digested Nothing, knows not where to find any Thing, it breaks his Memory: As Excess of Meat cloyes the Stomach, so an immeasurable Heaping of Things in the Memory confounds it.

THUS many read or hear much, too much perhaps for their Capacities; they have not Stowage for it, and so they *are ever learning, and never come to the Knowledge of the Truth.* Therefore look that ye understand and digest Things by Meditation; run not on too fast; he that rides Post, can never draw Maps of the Country. When one is impatient to stay on Things, they leave but a shallow Impression; as Greediness of the Appetite hinders Digestion. When a Thing is well studied and clearly apprehended, it will be much better remembered.

AND thus I have shewed the Hindrances of the Memory, or what are the common Causes of a bad Memory.

II. THE second Thing to be handled is the proper Helps to it: And they may be ranked under three Heads.

(1.) NATURAL Helps.

(2.) ARRIFICIAL.

(3.) SPIRITUAL.

(1.) As to natural Helps, two Things I would recommend:

I. A SOBER Diet. For if Excesses in Meat and Drink disturb the Brain, and consequently weaken the Memory, then certainly a sparing Diet preserves the Blood and Spirits in Order; and so by Consequence, are a certain (though not so sensible) Help to the Memory. And therefore *take Heed to yourselves, lest at any Time your Hearts be over-charged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness, and Cares of this Life,*



*Life*, and so you quite forget *that Day* that comes on Men *unawares*, Luke xxi. 34. The Heathens went far in this Moderation; how far then should Christians go? And what a base Thing is it to destroy our Reason by gratifying our Appetite!

2. A QUIET Mind. For if all Passions that are violent weaken, then a sedate and quiet Mind greatly strengthens the Memory. As in a Pool of Water, when it is clear, you may see the Fishes and every Thing easily in it; but when it is troubled, every Thing disappears: So it is with our Reason and Memory, as long as the Mind is quiet, we may tell where to find any Thing in the Memory, but when it is distracted, every Thing is hid from us. Let Faith therefore stand fixed upon Almighty God and his Promises, and then that Word is fulfilled, *Thou wilt keep him in perfect Peace, whose Mind is staid on Thee.*

(2.) ARTIFICIAL or outward Helps, are,

1. THE Repetition of those Things which we would remember. Revolving them in the Mind makes the Impression deeper, and the audible Repeating of them greatly fixes them there, Deut. xi. 18, 19. *Ye shall lay up these my Words in your Heart and in your Soul, and shall teach them your Children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thy House, and when thou walkest by the Way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.* Upon this Account, some great Orators have used to pronounce their Harangues in their Studies, to fix them the better on their Memories. And it is recorded of *Pythagoras*, that he appointed his Scholars to recollect every Night before they went to Bed, what they had heard or done all that Day. How much more should you on the LORD's Day at Night revive

what you have heard, confer of it with others, repeat it to your Family, by all which you will relieve the Weakness of this Faculty.

2. **WRITING** what we would remember is a great Help to the Memory. So the Holy Ghost teaches, *Deut. xi. 20. And thou shalt write them upon the Door-Posts of thine House, and upon thy Gates;* yea, *Chap. xvii. 18. The King himself was to write him a Copy of the Law in a Book,* that he might remember it the better: The very Writing of any Thing, fixes it deeper in the Mind. Alas! how many excellent Doctrines and Directions have you heard that are quite forgotten, which a discreet Use of Writing might have preserved unto you.

3. **CUSTOM**, or using your Memories is an excellent Way of improving them: Thus many wise Persons charge their Memories at the present, and thereby strengthen them, and then commit what they have remembered to Writing when they come Home, that no Time may wear it away: For every Faculty is improved and strengthened by employing it. We say, use Legs and have Legs; and so use the Memory and have a Memory. So if you oblige your Children and your Servants to bring you away an Account of a Sermon, you will see that Use and Custom will make that easy, which before they thought impossible. I have seen an old Man's Girdle, who could not read a Word; yet by the only Help of a Girdle which he wore, which was hung about with some knotted Points, he could bring Home every Particular of a Sermon.

(3.) **THE Spiritual Helps for Memory, are these:**

1. **BEWAIL**

1. **BEWAIL** your Forgetfulness. There Reformation and Amendment, when it is found, begins. The *Jews* say, that when *Adam* looked towards Paradise, he wept in the Remembrance of his Fall: I am sure, we have Cause to mourn and weep, and weep again at the Remembrance of it. To consider not only the great Guilt, but the sad Fruit of that Apostacy; and that as in other Particulars, so in Respect of our Memories, which have borne their Share in that Convulsion. And we have Cause to mourn also for all Excesses and Follies, which have concurr'd to make them worse; so that, though you may reckon a sorry Memory but a small Fault, yet you will find it is both the Effect, and the Sign, and the Cause of much Evil; insomuch that Idolatry and the worst Sins are in Scripture stiled *the forgetting of God*. Few of us would reckon it a small Fault, to have a Servant frequently neglect his Business and run into Errors, and still to excuse all by saying, I quite forgot it. For generally such Forgetfulness is the Effect of supine Negligence, and therefore we have the more Cause to be humbled seriously for this Sin.

2. **PRAYER** is a second Help: For every good and perfect Gift, whereof this is one, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Light, James i. 17. and therefore is to be sought by frequent and earnest Prayer, which is the Golden Key to unlock the Treasures of Heaven. O beg it then of Him, that as He sanctifies the Soul, He would sanctify this with the rest. And you have a Ground for your Prayer, in that our Saviour hath said, that the Father will send the Holy Ghost, to teach us all Things, and to bring all Things to our Remembrance. And this Spirit you may have for asking, Your heavenly Father shall give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him. God will grant your Prayer herein, there being



joined with the same, a due Use of all other Means. And you must not only crave this in your solemn Prayers, but also when you are Reading or Hearing, you should dart up an holy Ejaculation, or short Desire, **LORD** write this Truth in my Heart, and bless it to me! This is like the Clenching of a Nail. And when you have heard a Sermon, lock the Chest with *David's Prayer*, *1 Chron. xxix. 18.* *O LORD, keep this for ever in the Imagination of the Thoughts of my Heart.* And be assured, that God will hear the Breathings of his own Spirit, and give thee a Memory to retain his Truth.

3. **DILIGENT Attention.** If the Mind wander in Hearing, the Memory will be weak in Remembering. Confine therefore your Thoughts to the holy Work you are about, and fetch in your straggling Fancies with a hearty Sigh. Remember that Almighty GOD speaks to you by every good Book or Sermon that you read or hear; every Chapter and Sermon is a Letter from the GOD of Heaven, and directed in particular to you, and you know we read with Attention the meanest Letter that is directed to us, and observe every Period of it. The Gospel is our Saviour's Will and Testament; and how carefully doth every Child attend to every Clause of his Father's Will! Now the more diligent your Attention is, the better you will remember: As you know the greater Weight we lay on the Seal, the deeper Impression it makes. Holy *David* could say, *Psalms cxix. 93.* *I will never forget thy Precepts; for with them Thou hast quickened me.* The Scripture, the Sentence that hath quickened us, we shall not easily forget; when all the Heart is engaged, then all the Head is employed also. And it is no Marvel, that divers remember so little, when they are so palpably careless.

less in Hearing, and their wandering Eyes plainly discover their wandering Minds.

4. **DUE ESTIMATION.** The more we love and admire any Thing, the better we remember it. This is the Reason given of Childrens remembering Things so well, because they admire every Thing as being new to them. And of old People, the Saying is known, That they remember all such Things as they care for: For when we esteem any Thing, the Affections work upon the Spirits, which are the Instruments of the Memory, and so seal Things upon it. Why is it, that a Woman cannot forget her sucking Child? Because she doth vehemently love it: And the like Affection in us to good Things, would keep us from forgetting them. So Mr. *Greenham*, "The best Art of Memory is to be humbled at GOD's Threatnings, and comforted at his Promises; for great Grievings and Joys leave great Impressions on us." And therefore apprehend spiritual Things to be very excellent, and receive the Truth in the Love of it, and you will remember it; but when we have a mean and low Opinion of heavenly Truths, they are easily forgotten.

5. **SERIOUS Meditation** is the last Help I shall mention. When People read or hear, and presently plunge themselves into foreign Business, then generally all is lost, *James i. 24, 25.* *For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his Way, and straightway forgets what Manner of Man he was.* But *who so looketh* (the Word signifies, to penetrate into a Thing with his Eye) *and continueth therein,* (that is, so considering) *he being not a forgetful Hearer, but a Doer of this Work, this Man shall be blessed in his Deed.* By which is not meant a speculative and fruitless Meditation, but that which digests the Things

Things we read or hear for Use and Practice, *Psal.* cxix. 11. *Thy Word have I hid in my Heart, that I might not sin against Thee.* Here is a Truth, or a Duty, or Promise for such a Time or Case. Such rolling good Things in our Thoughts, doth habituate and familiarize them to the Soul, and they abide the longer. This is clear in other Cases: For if one hath received an unkind Word, if it go out at one Ear as it comes in at the other, it leaves no great Impression; but if you set yourself to ruminate upon it, then it is a long Time ere you can forget it. And so in some Measure it would be in good Things; give them a little Heart-Room, bestow second Thoughts upon them, shut the Book when you have read a little, and think of it, and it will abide: It is the soaking Rain that enters deepest into the Earth, when a sudden Shower slides away. But herein ordinary Hearers are strangely negligent; they read, they hear, they forget; for they never meditate of it: They turn down Leafs in their Bibles in the Congregation, but they seldom turn them up again in reflecting upon what they heard, and so their Labour is lost, and ours also. And so much for the Helps to a better Memory.

III. I come now to the last Thing, which is some short Application.

*First*, MAGNIFY GOD for your Memories, especially you that have good Memories; be not proud of them, but be very thankful. I have somewhere read of *Simon Tharver*, a *Cornish-man*, that would so boast of his Skill in Philosophy and Divinity, that he could on a sudden answer any Problem that was proposed to him; and the Historian says, that his Parts and Memory were so smitten, that he could not repeat the LORD's Prayer. O give GOD the Glory of this Faculty, and say, fear-fully



*fully and wonderfully am I made:* And if your Memories have some Strength and Faithfulness in them, praise Him the more, for you have a great Advantage beyond others, you have a Treasure which others want. Many a poor Christian would be content to forget all his earthly Concerns, so that he could but remember the Things of eternal Life. Be sure then, that ye be truly thankful.

*Secondly,* LET all GOD's Ministers, that preach, or that write, labour to consult Peoples Memories; and to that End, observe some proper Method in their Books and Sermons. A confused or cryptical Method confounds the Memory, and a Multitude of naked Heads over-presseth it; but a clear Connection and a proper Method greatly assists it. The Holy Ghost Himself hath in several Places particularly stooped down to us herein; in divers of the *Psalms*, in one Chapter of the *Proverbs*, in the whole Book of *Lamentations*, He hath proceeded alphabetically, for the Relief of the Memory. That Matter, Manner and Method surely should be used by us, which is most proper, not only to inform Peoples Understandings, but to prevail with their Wills, to awaken their Consciences, and also which may best stick with them, when they are parted from us; for the Work of Conviction, Conversion and Comfort are generally perfected by After-Thoughts. And seeing Peoples Memories are so weak, let us do what we can to relieve and help them.

*Thirdly,* LABOUR to improve your Memories, to have them cured and strengthened. Content not yourselves with such treacherous Memories, satisfy not yourselves with fruitless Complaints of them; but proceed to a vigorous Endeavour to amend them. Consider,

1. THIS is possible, and this is proved by Experience. Many have come by the Help of God to remember more and better than they did before; and why should not you increase the Number of such Proficients? It is not fit for a Christian to despond, in any such Case, but to be up and doing. When a Ship leaks, it is not presently cast away; for, says the Master, this Vessel may yet do me Service. You have leaking Memories; yet being careen'd, they may be much more serviceable than ever they were.

DESPONDENCY spoils all Endeavours. Neither do you sit thus down in other Cases. If your Body or Brain be weak, you will try Experiments, you will go to one Physician after another; be not then more careless of your noblest Parts. The Cure is possible, at least in some good Measure.

2. It is reasonable that your Memories, which have been Sinks of Sin, should become Helps to Heaven. All our Faculties are given us for this End, and is it not highly reasonable that they should be so applied? It is apparent, that our Memories have been grievously perverted, and therefore *as we have yielded our Members Servants to Uncleaness and to Iniquity, unto Iniquity; even so we should yield our Members Servants to Righteousness, unto Holiness*, Rom. vi. 19. Seeing GOD hath given us a noble Faculty, should we neglect or abuse it? Can others remember the World, and their Lusts, and shall not we remember the holy Things that refer to a better World? Nay, can we remember a thousand unprofitable, hurtful and sinful Matters, and not those Things that most nearly and highly concern us? It is intolerable.

3. THIS

3. THIS is necessary. It is an unquestionable Duty; that fundamental Law propounded in the Old Testament, *Deut. vi. 5.* and confirmed in the New, *Matt. xxii. 37.* *Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind,* doth oblige us to strain every Faculty to the utmost in GOD's Behalf. One End also of *Christ's* coming into the World, was to repair our depraved Faculties; and shall we suffer Him to die in vain? The Text I am upon, shews how necessary it is as a Means of Faith and Salvation. We find by Experience that this Faculty is miserably corrupted, and therefore it is undoubtedly necessary, that it be renewed.

Do you object, we can do but what we can, let it be never so necessary?

AND I pray how far have your Endeavours travelled in this Business? Have you carefully used the fore-mentioned Means, and continued in the Use of them? No, no, your Impotency is wilful; you cannot, because you mind it not; or else certainly, if you were ever so weak, Grace would be ready at your Service.

4. A GOOD Memory is very helpful and useful. It is not a vain Thing that is thus pressed upon you. For,

(1) IT is a great Means of Knowledge. For what signifies your Reading or Hearing, if you remember Nothing? It is not Eating or Drinking, but digesting your Food, that keeps you alive: And so it is in this Case, *Prov. iv. 20, 21.* *My Son, (not only) attend unto my Words, incline thine Ear unto my Sayings, (but) keep them in the Midst* of



*of thy Heart: Then they are Life unto those that find them, and Health to all their Flesh.*

(2) IT is a Means of Faith, as is plain in my Text, *unless ye have believed in vain.* For though Faith doth rest purely on the Word of God, yet when the Word and Works of God are forgotten, Faith will stagger. Hence our Saviour saith, *Matt. xvi. 9. O ye of little Faith, do not ye understand, neither remember the five Loaves of the Five Thousand?* The Word of God is the Sword of the Spirit, whereby Satan is foiled; but if the Sword be out of the Way, by Reason of Forgetfulness, how shall we conflict with this Enemy?

(3) IT is a Means of Comfort. If a poor Christian in Distress could remember God's Promises, they would inspire him with new Life; but when they are forgotten, his Spirits sink. Our Way to Heaven lies over Hills and Vales: When we are on the Hill, we think we shall never be low again; and so when we are in the Valley, we fear we shall never have Comfort again. But now, a faithful Memory is a great Help, *Psalms lxxvii. 10, 11. I said, This is my Infirmary: But I will remember the Years of the Right-Hand of the Most High; I will remember the Works of the LORD; surely, I will remember thy Wonders of old.* So also, *Psalms cxix. 52. I remembered thy Judgments of old, O LORD; and have comforted myself.*

(4) IT is a Means of Thankfulness. We are all wanting in this Duty of Thankfulness, and one Cause thereof is Forgetfulness of the Mercies of God. Hence ungrateful Men are said to have *bad Memories.* What abundant Matter of Thanksgiving would a sanctified Memory suggest to every Christian! Hence holy David calls upon himself, *Psalms*

*Psalm ciii. 2. Bless the LORD, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits.* By which Forgetfulness and such other Means it comes to pass, that Praise and Thanksgiving hath so little, which should have so much Room in our daily Devotions.

(5) IT is a Means of Hope. For *Experientiae* works Hope, and the Memory is the Store-house of Experience; therein we lay up all the Instances of GOD's Goodness to us heretofore, *Lam. iii. 21. This I recall to Mind, therefore have I Hope.* Hence they who do not trust in GOD, are said in Scripture, *to forget Him.* And one Reason of Mens Impatience and Dejectedness in Trouble, is assigned by the Apostle, *Heb. xiii. 5. And ye have forgotten the Exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto Children, My Son despise not thou the Chastning of the LORD, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him.*

(6) IT is a Means of Repentance. For how can we repent or mourn for what we have forgotten? As therefore there is a culpable Remembrance of Sin, when we remember it in Kindness; so there is a laudable Remembrance of Sin, when we remember it with Displeasure, *Ezek. xvi. 63. That thou mayst remember and be confounded, and never open thy Mouth more.* But alas! we write our Sins in the Sand, and foolishly imagine that the eternal GOD forgets them just as soon as we; though in such Cases He hath said and sworn, *Amos viii. 7. Surely, I will never forget any of their Works.*

(7) IT is a Means of Usefulness. No Man should, nor indeed can be, singly religious: When one Spark of Grace is truly kindled in the Heart, it will quickly endeavour to heat others also: As

we are born, and much more we are new-born, to be helpful to others. Now herein a good Memory is exceeding useful; out of which, as out of a Store-house, a wise Christian may bring forth Matters both new and old. Such may say, *We have heard with our Ears, and our Fathers have told us,* this and that Observation. And likewise, *as we have heard, so we have seen,* what may be very useful to many a Soul. So that you see a good Memory is useful many Ways.

5. THE Want of Memory is a great Defect and Loss, when we cannot remember what we read or hear, why Time is lost. I will not say, quite lost; but it is not improved: Whereas when GOD's Word is remembered, then *When thou goest it shall lead thee, when thou sleepest it shall keep thee, and when thou awakest it shall talk with thee,* Prov. vi. 22. But a broken Memory hath heard of GOD's famous Acts of Providence, but forgotten them; hath read rare Examples of GOD's Mercy, Justice, Power and Goodness, but they are slipped away and lost.

IN a Word, so far as thy Memory fails, so far will Meditation fail, Delight fail, and Practice in a great Measure fail. And therefore set yourselves in the Use of the Means prescribed, and all the other good Means to heal and strengthen your Memories; and give the more earnest Heed to the Things which ye have heard, lest at any Time ye let them slip, Heb. ii. 1. And so far in the third Use.

Fourthly, THE fourth Exhortation is to young People; store your Memories in the Time of Youth. Eccles. xii. 1. *Remember now thy Creator*



*in the Days of thy Youth.* Now your Memories are fresh and strong, hereafter they will be shattered with Cares and Business. A new Ship, or any Vessel that is new, is free from Leaks, but Time and Travel will batter it; so will it be with you; Care will batter you, Grief will batter you, and therefore now store yourselves, now a dozen Chapters, a good Catechism, a Collection of useful Texts and Doctrines will take no Room, nor make you go the heavier, nor sleep the worse: And therefore it concerns Parents, both to have such Things in their Hearts, and to teach them diligently to their Children. Perhaps they may not understand the Sense of them at the present, but these will be ready in their Minds 'till Grace and Understanding come, and then they will help them exceedingly. Yet a Measure must be observed both with Old and Young. A Ship may be laden, but must not be over-burden'd, lest all the Cargo be sunk and lost. A just Discretion will best determine the Measure herein, according to the Capacities of the Subjects.

*Fifthly,* LET us all labour for more Holiness; for that raiseth all the Faculties, and reduces them to their right Frame and proper Objects. The more Grace we have, the better we shall remember, and especially better Things. Grace strengthens the Memory always for Practice, though it serve not always for Discourse. Thereby we love Truths and Duties better, and it is easy to remember that which we love; and therefore let it be our daily Prayer, that *the GOD of Peace would sanctify us wholly, Spirit, Soul and Body.* It is not for Christians to enquire just how little Grace will serve our Turn for Salvation, but rather how much may be attained and improved to the Glory of God.

*Lastly*, REDUCE into Practice that which you do remember. The End of all true Knowledge is Practice. Remember his Commandments to do them. If it be a Doctrinal Truth which you read or hear, consider what Influence it hath upon the Heart. If it be a Duty which is set before you, immediately set about it. If a Sin be exposed, presently root it out. If Sincerity or Hypocrisy be decyphered, try thy spiritual State thereby without Delay. For, as a Treasure in the Chest is in Danger of the Robber, but when it is laid out on a good Purchase it is safe; so while spiritual Notions swim only in the Memory, you may easily lose them, but they are safe when they are once incorporated into your real Practice.

BUT alas! there are too many that are like those Chapmen, who come to the Shop, and lay by a great many rich Wares, but when all is done buy few or none: So these cheapen and bid for the Pearl, but will not buy it; they will talk over all the Points of Religion, before they will seriously practise any one of them. Then you remember the Sabbath aright, when you so remember it before it comes, that when it comes, you keep it holy: Then you remember God truly, when you fear and love and trust in Him: Then you remember your Neighbour as you ought, when you remember to do Good and communicate: Then you remember yourselves best, when you remember to have always a Conscience void of Offence towards God and Men. In a Word, then you remember your latter End rightly, when you keep your Oil ready in your Lamps and in your Vessels, that your Master may find you so doing.

BUT I conclude. It is worth observing, that holy David, among all the rest of his blessed Psalms,

*Psalms*, hath one, which is the thirty-eight *Psalms*, which he stiles a *Psalms* of David to bring to Remembrance: His Memory it seems had Need of Help as well as ours.

Now the LORD grant that this Sermon may by the Blessing of GOD upon it, be herein at least useful, namely, to preserve better Sermons in your Mind; so shall I have my End, GOD the Glory, and you the Comfort. *Amen.*

### *End of the Forty-Fourth VOLUME.*



But I conclude. It is worth observing, that holy David among all the



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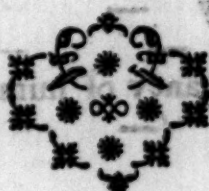
## Extracts from Dr. ANNESLEY'S SERMONS.

SERMON I. GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY our Support in all worldly Distractions.

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